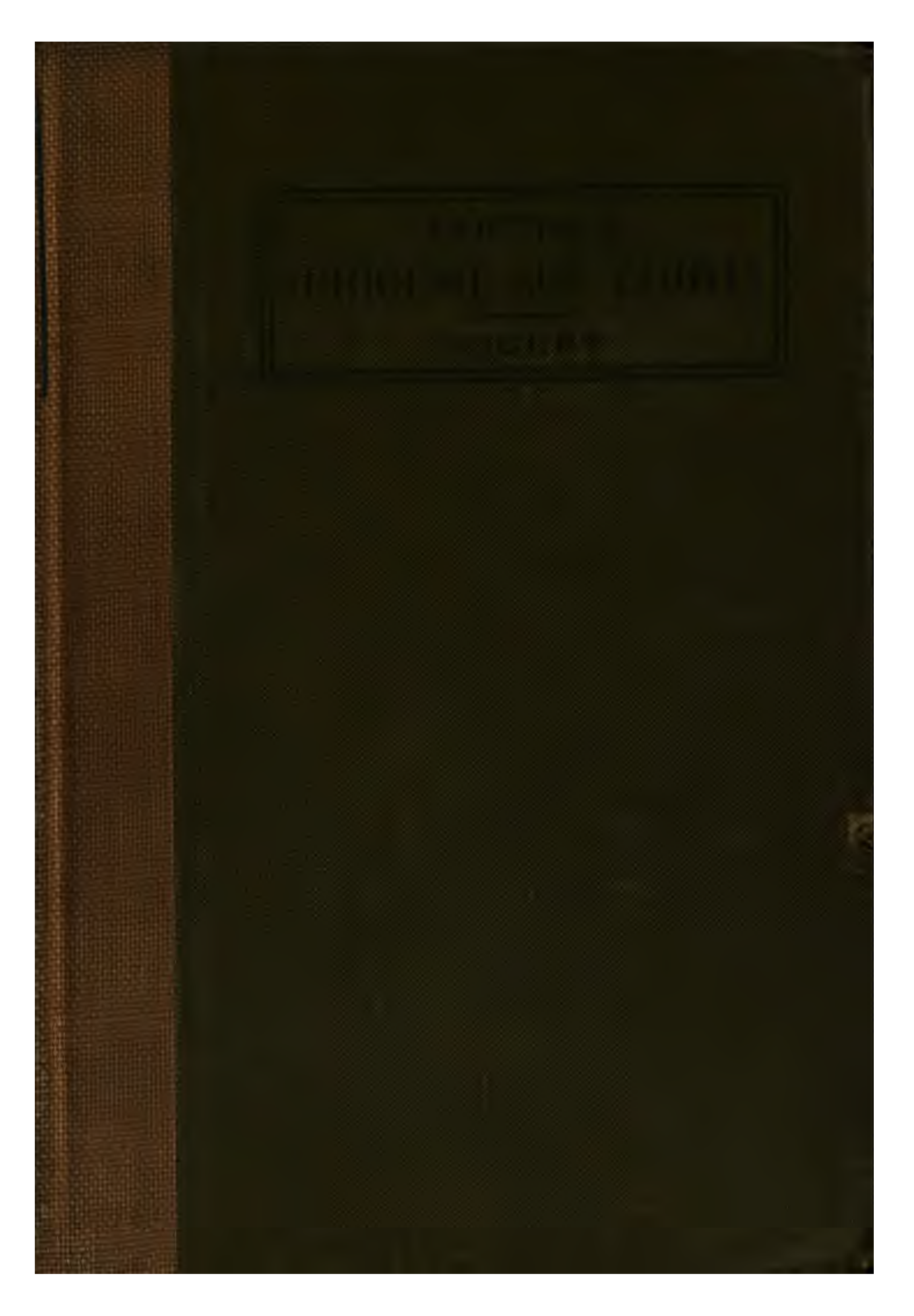




IPHIGENIE AUF TAURIS

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GOETHE'S

IPHIGENIE AUF TAURIS

WITH

INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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TO

MY SON

CARL EDGAR EGGERT.

PREFACE.

THE *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, of all the dramas of Goethe, still holds the first place, as a school study, both in Germany and elsewhere.[1]

The reason for this popularity is in the remarkable character of the work. It is at once a most interesting dramatic presentation of an important mental and moral conflict, and a poem replete with rare and exquisite beauty of thought and expression.

Wrought out on the plan of a Greek drama and imbued with the Greek spirit of simplicity and perfection of form, it constitutes an admirable basis for a comparison between the best of ancient history and the best of modern art.

But in spite of its simplicity there is perhaps no other drama of Goethe, not even excepting his *Faust*, which calls for fuller elucidation, if one seeks to attain the highest aim of literary study.

The many points of connection between the modern poet and the poets of Greece require attention, as well as the influence of the French drama, which has been so well shown by Hans Morsch, and the relation of the drama to the poet's own life and efforts at the time of its composition.

Whether or not the present editor has succeeded in furnishing this and other desirable assistance must be decided by those who shall use this edition.

[1] *Jahresberichte für neuere deutsche Literaturgeschichte*, II. 190, 1891.

The editor has spared no pains in his endeavor to make the edition an advance on any previous one, and to realize, as far as possible, the wish of the editor of the series to produce an edition of permanent value.

The special editor wishes to express his thanks to Professor W. T. Hewett for valuable suggestions and much critical and scholarly assistance. He has also been much helped by the excellent work done in this line by Professor Buchheim, Max Hoeferer, Stephen Wätzoldt, and others mentioned in the Bibliography, but he has been guided largely by his own long experience as a teacher.

For the revision of the Greek quotations he is indebted to Professor Charles Forster Smith of the University of Wisconsin.

The text of this edition is based on the Weimar edition. The modern orthography has been adopted and slight changes in punctuation have been thought advisable.

C. A. E.

CHICAGO, ILL.,
August 13, 1898.

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INTRODUCTION.

I. THE STORY OF IPHIGENIA.

THE story of *Iphigenia* (Greek: *Iphigeneia*) and of her sacrifice is not found in Homer who mentions, however, three daughters of King Agamemnon: Chrysothemis, Electra and Iphianassa. In his drama, *Electra*, Sophocles (496–406 B. C.) introduces these three, but adds Iphigenia. This name had already been used by Æschylus (525–456 B. C.). Both poets found their authority for this feature in the *Cypria*, a poem of the so-called "Epic Cycle." The contents of this cycle we know, at least to some extent, through the *Chrestomathia* of the grammarian Proclus, as only a few fragments of the originals have come down to us. The *Cypria* is one of several epics connected with the *Iliad*, and even formed a sort of introduction to it. It is attributed to Stasimos of Salamis in Cyprus, who lived about 770 B. C. We know that the later poets of Greece, and especially the dramatists, drew largely upon this "Cycle" for their material. The descent of Iphigenia was fabled to be from Tantalus, the son of Zeus and Pluto (Pluto, the synonym of wealth), and father of Pelops and Niobe. He was a rich king whose kingdom was situated on the Syplos in Lydia, or, according to another account, in Phrygia.

One of the sons of Pelops was Atreus, the father of Agamemnon, King of Argos, who led the Greeks in their

war against Troy. The latter was married to Clytemnestra, and was the father of Iphigenia, Orestes and Electra.

Both Æschylus and Sophocles represent the daughter Iphigenia as actually sacrificed at the altar of Artemis, in Aulis, in order to propitiate this goddess, who was angry with Agamemnon and punished him and the Greeks by refusing favorable winds for their fleet. The ships being thus detained at Aulis, the priest and seer, Kalchas, proclaimed to the Greeks that the goddess demanded the sacrifice of the youngest daughter of Agamemnon before she would grant them favorable winds to sail to Troy. Various versions exist concerning the cause of the anger of the goddess. In the *Electra* of Euripides we are informed that Kalchas addressed Agamemnon, saying: "Thou wilt not lead forth thy ships from the ports of this land, before Diana shall receive thy daughter Iphigenia as a victim; for thou didst vow to sacrifice to the light-bearing goddess whatsoever the year should bring forth most beautiful. Now thy wife Clytemnestra brought forth a daughter in thy house — whom thou must needs sacrifice." (*Electra* 1–24. T. A. Buckley's translation.) Sophocles makes his Electra say: "My father — so I have heard — was once disporting himself in the grove of the goddess, when his footfall startled a dappled and antlered stag; he shot it, and chanced to utter a certain boast concerning its slaughter. Wroth thereat, the daughter of Leto detained the Greeks, that, in quittance for the wild creature's life, my father should yield up the life of his own daughter." (Soph.: *Electra*, ll. 566 etc., Jebb's translation.)

The king induced his wife, Clytemnestra, to come to Aulis with Iphigenia, under pretense of a marriage with

Achilles; Orestes, then a tender boy, accompanied her. The sacrifice being over, the Greeks set sail for Troy, while Clytemnestra returned to Mycenæ, where Ægisthus became her paramour and ruled in Agamemnon's stead. On the latter's return she avenged her daughter's death by killing him. As he stepped from his bath, he was suddenly enveloped in a net which his wife threw over him, and, while trying to extricate himself, was slain by her. Euripides (480–486 B. C.) varied this story by making Ægisthus take part in the murder, while Homer relates that Ægisthus accomplished the death of the king by means of twenty youths, independently of Clytemnestra.

Orestes was looked upon as the natural avenger of his father. He therefore excited the suspicion of Ægisthus, and was compelled to flee. He found a home with King Strophius of Phocis, his uncle on his father's side, and here he grew up in intimate friendship with Pylades, the king's son. The two having arrived at man's estate, repaired to Mycenæ in disguise, after Orestes had consulted the oracle of Delphi, the special mouthpiece of the god Apollo. The imperative, though unwritten law of his country, and the positive command of Apollo made it incumbent upon him to avenge his father's death. This is forcibly stated in the *Oresteia* of Æschylus, consisting of the three dramas, *Agamemnon*, *The Libation Pourers* (*Choëphoroi*), and *The Eumenides*. Orestes speaks of the oracle

> "That bade me on this enterprise to start, —
> And with clear voice spake often, warning me
> Of chilling pain-throes at the fevered heart,
> *Unless my father's murderers I should chase,*
> *Bidding me kill them in the self-same fashion.*"
>
> *Choëp.*: 263 ff. *Plumptre's translation.*

Dire vengeance was threatened, if he should fail to obey the oracle: plagues would visit, and the Furies pursue him. He asks:

"Must I not trust such oracles as these?"

Ibid., 290 ff.

Orestes obeys the command, slays his mother and her paramour, and becomes a prey of the Furies. Not even a god can procure him immunity from their pursuit. In the *Eumenides* of Æschylus he is cited before the court of the Areopagus, the Furies acting as accusers, the god Apollo as witness, and Pallas Athena as the presiding judge whose casting vote acquits him. The Furies are no longer named Erinyes, the angry or pursuing ones, but they receive the name Eumenides, the benevolent or well disposed.

According to Euripides, however, only a part of the Furies accepted this solution. His Orestes says: "But when I came to the hill of Mars (Areopagus, from Ares, the god of war, = Mars) and stood in the judgment, I indeed occupying one seat, but the eldest of the Erinyes the other, having spoken and heard respecting my mother's death, Phœbus saved me by bearing witness, but Pallas Athena (Minerva) counted out (for me) the equal votes with her hand, and I came off victor in the bloody trial. *As many then as sate in judgment*, persuaded by the sentence, *determined to hold their dwelling near the court itself.*[1] *But as many of the Erinyes as did not yield* obedience to the sentence passed, continually kept driving me with unsettled wanderings." (Eurip., *Iphigenia among the Tauri*, ll. 961–971. T. A. Buckley's translation.)

This proves the free use the Greek poets made of the

[1] Preller. *Griechische Mythologie.* I. 250.

original myth, for at first we hear only of three Furies, and Sophocles even mentions only one in his *Electra*, ll. 488, etc. ("χαλκόπους Ἐρίνυς.")

Orestes, pursued by the dissenting Furies, again appeals to Apollo, and in obedience to the oracle of Delphi comes to the land of the Tauri, where he finds his sister. Iphigenia had not been immolated at Aulis, but Diana (Artemis) had removed her to this distant land in order that she might be her priestess in a temple which stood near the seashore. The temple contained a statue of the goddess which was said to have fallen from the sky. Orestes had to remove this statue to Greece in order to be freed from the Furies. He accomplished this object with the help of Athena, the tutelary goddess of Athens.

According to another version, the Iphigenia who was sacrificed at Aulis was the daughter of Theseus, king of Athens, and of Helen, which would prove the early presence in Athens of the worship of Artemis, for otherwise the Athenians would not have associated the story with their famous legendary king. It is not known where Euripides found his version of the sacrifice. As he represents it in his *Iphigenia in Aulis*, at the moment when the priest struck at the bared throat of the maiden, the goddess removed her to Tauris, leaving a fawn bleeding and dying upon the altar. These stories are echoes from the time when human sacrifices ceased in Greece, which was probably not later than the eighth century B.C.

Athens became finally one of the chief seats of the worship of Artemis. The goddess was represented as the sister of Apollo, the moon being her emblem, as that of Apollo was the sun.

As the brother of Iphigenia, early mention is made of Orestes. In Cappadocia (Asia Minor) there existed a priestly family called the "Orestiadæ," and Iphigenia and Orestes are named as the founders of Artemis worship in Sparta and Attica, in parts of Asia Minor, and in Italy.[1]

In Brauron, in Attica, a place where Artemis received special honors, and also in Megara, the grave of Iphigenia was shown. It is further stated that at Hermione Artemis was worshipped with the epithet, "Iphigeneia" (=one born with power), which would make it highly probable that Artemis and Iphigenia stand as names for the same goddess, and that the name of the deity was finally given to a priestess, a confusion of identity not unfrequent in the legends of Greece.[2]

II. FORERUNNERS OF GOETHE'S DRAMA.

a. The Iphigenia among the Tauri by Euripides.

The important facts of this drama may be stated as follows: King Thoas (the swift, from *θόος*, swift) ruled over the land of the Tauri, the peninsula now called the Crimea. A temple stood close to the sea (the Black Sea), which contained the statue of Artemis, whose priestess was Iphigenia. She was charged by the king to sacrifice, at the shrine of the goddess, two captive Greeks, one of whom

[1] Preller. *Grieschische Mythologie.* I. 250.

[2] Suchier. *De Diana Brauronia.* Marburg, 1847. — Claus. *De Diana antiquissima apud Græcos natura.* Breslau, 1881. — Jacobson. *De fabulis ad Iphigeniam pertinentibus.* Königsberg, 1888. — R. Foster. *Iphigenie.* Breslau, 1895.

was apparently guilty of having shed the blood of a near relative.

Although opposed to the cruel usage, and doubting whether such sacrifice can be agreeable to the goddess, the priestess is willing to obey the command, because her heart has been hardened by a dream which makes her believe that her brother is dead. She regrets that she cannot wreak vengeance also on Menelaus and Helen, whom she holds responsible for the misfortunes of her family.

When the two captives are brought before her she discovers in one of them her own brother, the other being Pylades, his devoted friend. The three now conspire how to get possession of the statue, in order to remove it to Greece, as the oracle has directed. Iphigenia suggests the stratagem of pretending to the king that the presence of the guilty strangers needs an act of lustration; that the prisoners must first be purified, and the image of the goddess bathed in the sea. The king consents, and follows the directions of Iphigenia to attend, in the meantime, to the purification of the sanctuary. For this purpose he enters the temple with a torch. While the credulous king is engaged in his task, Iphigenia proceeds to the seashore with the captives and attendants, herself carrying in her arms the wooden statue of the goddess. But before they can make their escape the plan is betrayed, and they are brought before the angry king. As there is now no possibility of executing the command of the oracle, the poet brings upon the stage a new force, his *deus ex machinâ*. Pallas Athena appears and commands the king to let the prisoners and the priestess, together with the chorus of captive Greek women, proceed to Greece with the statue.

The play partakes more of the nature of a comedy than of a tragedy or serious drama. It was intended to please an Athenian audience by the successful ruse of Iphigenia, who exhibits the ordinary characteristics of a Greek woman. She is bright, inventive, full of sisterly affection, but, at the same time, vindictive, unscrupulous, cunning, mendacious and perfidious.

Donne says of her: "Iphigenia proves that she is Greek to the core. She can plot craftily. She will even hazard the wrath of a deity by a timely fraud. King Thoas, little more than a simple country gentleman, dividing his time between field-sports and ceremonies, sacred or civil, is no match for the three wily Greeks."[1]

In the German play we are impressed with the Germanic love of truth, the high regard in which loyalty and fidelity are held, and recall the spirit that animated the heroes of the *Niebelungenlied*. The Greek play is not dissimilar to the many stories of successful theft, fraud and deceit that characterize the legendary lore of Greece.

But it was not merely the *Iphigenia among the Tauri* of Euripides which Goethe had in view when he conceived and wrought out his poem. The character of Orestes interested him greatly, and there is no doubt that he was deeply impressed with the treatment this character had received by the three great tragic poets of Greece. The *Oresteia* of Æschylus, consisting of the three dramas, *Agamemnon*, *The Libation Pourers* (*Choëphoroi*), and *The Eumenides*; the *Electra* of Sophocles, and the *Electra* and also the *Orestes* of Euripides, have variously influenced Goethe. In

[1] *Ancient Classics for English Readers.* p. 118. Edinburgh and London, 1872.

the notes, reference is made to these dramas wherever necessary. It must suffice here to state that, in Goethe's treatment, the whole subject is presented under a new light, and that, while the poet bases his drama on the works of his predecessors, he is nowhere merely an imitator of any of them. Among the works that indirectly influenced him we may, unhesitatingly, also mention the *Antigone* and *Philoctetes* of Sophocles, and the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer.

b. French and German Imitations.

Goethe's familiarity with French literature justifies us in assuming that he had read most, if not all, of the imitations of Euripides and the other dramatists in French.

Baïf (Jean-Antoine de —, 1532–1589) published a translation of the *Electra* of Sophocles. La Grange-Chancel (1676–1758) wrote a drama, *Oreste et Pilade*, which met with approval (1697). In 1700 an *Electra* by de Longepierre was produced. All these were eclipsed by *Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon* (1674–1762) of Dijon, who wrote a number of classic imitations, among them, *Atrée et Thyeste* (1707) and *Électre;* and by Jean Racine (1639–1699), whose *Iphigénie en Aulide* outranks all similar productions in the French language.

Racine also left a few scenes for an *Iphigénie en Tauride.* It is not impossible that these French titles may have suggested to Goethe the analogy of Tauride-Tauris with Aulide-Aulis, and that he thus came to select the term Tauris as more euphonic than the regular German form, Taurien.[1]

[1] In the Greek of Euripides the title is Ἰφιγένεια ἡ Ταυρικῄ. This was latinized into *Iphigenia in Tauris; among the Tauri.* It has been surmised by Köchly that Goethe was misled by the Latin name, but this is extremely unlikely.

The name "Arcas" occurs in Racine as that of a servant of Agamemnon. Goethe used it for the confidant and officer of King Thoas. Racine's carefulness in constructing his tragedies with strict regard to a logical and psychological solution may have had its effect on Goethe.

In the play of La Grange-Chancel, which had also the title of *Iphigénie en Tauride*, King Thoas offers marriage to Iphigenia. It is probable, as has been pointed out by Morsch,[1] that this suggested the same idea to Goethe.

Voltaire (1694–1778) reworked and improved the *Electre* of Crébillon, giving his play the title *Oreste*. This was imitated and translated by F. W. Gotter (1746–1797) under the title *Orest und Electra*. Although the subject is not the same, the influence which this work had on Goethe's drama was probably of some importance. Its publication, occurring as it did, only four years before the composition of Goethe's *Iphigenie* may have led him to conceive the purpose of writing this drama. Gotter was at one time on terms of intimacy with him and it is natural to suppose that he read his work with particular interest. For a similar reason the conversation between Hercules and Admet in Wieland's *Alcestis*, which the young poet had mercilessly ridiculed in his famous diatribe, *Götter, Helden und Wieland*, may have furnished some reminiscences for the scene between Orestes and Pylades (Act II). An *Iphigénie en Tauride* by Guimond de la Touche, presented for the first time in 1757, at the Comédie française, held the stage for a long time. The scene of meeting and recognition of brother and sister is wrought out with considerable skill, in imitation of similar scenes in Euripides and Sophocles.

[1] *Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturgeschichte.* iv, 80.

Johann Elias Schlegel (1719–1749) had produced from Greek and French sources a drama, *Orest und Pylades* which is not without merit, and which may have given Goethe some suggestions.

The French authors have, in imitation of Homer and Virgil, made use of the descent into the lower world as a feature of their drama. The fancied descent in Gotter's version suggested, it is believed, the corresponding feature in Goethe's drama. But Gotter, following his French sources, presents the descent as accompanied with the greatest horror, while Goethe's Orestes is relieved and encouraged by what he thinks he sees, but which in reality is only a vision.

The important element in all these productions is the character of Orestes, because with this character Goethe has compared himself. But as the Greek originals treat this very subject with much more plastic force and poetic energy, it was to them, undoubtedly, that he turned when he revolved the subject in his mind.[1] There is evidence in his drama that he was also influenced, in some minor

[1] The subject of Orestes was treated over and over again by the poets of antiquity. Virgil's line, *Aut Agamemnonius scenis agitatus Orestes* (*Aeneid:* IV. 471) is well known. Juvenal in *Satires:* I. 5, speaks of an interminable Orestes: . . .

> "Summi plena jam margine libri
> Scriptus, et in tergo, *necdum finitus Orestes.*"

But the most interesting reference occurs in the *Tristia* of Ovid, IV, 4. . .

> "Quo postquam, *dubium pius an sceleratus, Orestes*
> Exactus furiis venerat ipse suis. . ."

These lines were written near the place where the Taurian temple is said to have stood.

matters, by the *Roman Collection of Fables* by Hyginus.[1] These and similar matters of interest are explained in the notes. It may be remarked that none of these influences touch the core and substance of Goethe's poem.

III. GOETHE'S IPHIGENIE IN TAURIS.

What distinguishes Goethe's drama from that of all his predecessors is the prominence given in it to a purely ethical and psychological treatment, besides which the mythological element appears only of secondary importance. He puts before us a noble woman, a heavily stricken brother, a devoted friend, a generous, though fierce barbarian king, and an intelligent friend and servant of this king. These characters appear before us with their beliefs, superstitions and personal peculiarities. Their actions are primarily based on superstitious belief, but they go on acting as though the superstition counted for nothing, and their personal qualities for everything. A mysterious curse is believed by them to rest on the house of Tantalus, but the story of Tantalus goes back so far that even Iphigenia thinks of it as something exceedingly remote. At the end of the fourth act she says: "An old song again sounds in my ears, — *I had forgotten it and willingly forgot it* — In our youth the nurse used to sing it to me and to my brother and sister. I noted it well." And now she recites this ancient song: "How the gods use their power as it pleases

[1] Gajus Julius Hyginus, a freedman of Emperor Augustus, published a collection of 227 fables (*Fabularum Liber*), mostly from Greek sources. Text by Schmidt. (Jena, 1872.) He is also the author of a treatise on astronomy.

them; how they hurl the guest whom they admitted to their banquets, as soon as a dispute arises, into the lowest depths of hell, where in vain he waits for a just judgment."

We feel the awe-inspiring force of this ancient song, but we fail to see that anything in that story determines the action either of Iphigenia or of anyone else. Far from believing in the injustice of the gods, her faith in them is deep and strong. All she fears is that she may lose that faith, if these gods forsake her now when she needs their help; if they permit her only brother to be slain at the altar, unless she makes use of falsehood in order to save him. And so she ends with that pathetic appeal: "Oh, may no repugnance at last strike root in my soul! — May the Titans', the old gods' deep hatred of you, Olympians, not also seize my tender breast with vulture-claws! *Save me, and save your image in my soul!*"

There is in her a sublime faith which makes her feel that the gods *must* care to keep their image pure in a pure soul like hers! It is because her heart is *pure* that she has hoped to redeem the home of her family sooner or later, but now deaf necessity with brazen hand will force upon her this disloyalty to her high mission. She will be no longer innocent, and her hope will fail to be realized.

We can see how in this great conflict in her soul the purely human and the mythological elements mingle, but we cannot be for a moment in doubt as to the essential predominance of the former. This conflict is dramatic in a high degree, transpiring before us, not the subject of a recital.

But with such feelings it is impossible for her, at the decisive moment, to carry out her promise to Pylades, and to

save her brother, his friend and herself by deceit. Her innate nobleness asserts itself, she casts to the winds the fear and caution which the skillful words of Pylades have produced, and speaks the truth to King Thoas with a noble trust in the generous character of the man, and a childlike faith in the help of the immortal gods. It should be noted that this scene gains in dramatic power by the taunting words of the king, which at first excite her and finally determine her to the act of heroism which forms the climax of the dramatic action of the piece.

The scene loses nothing of its almost unequalled grandeur by the doubts which seize her as soon as she has uttered the fatal words. She was so full of confidence in the king's noble nature that she had concluded her appeal with the characteristic words: "Verdirb uns — wenn du darfst." "Destroy us — if your heart permits it." But she is a woman who can conquer only by womanly means. Her deed was one of heroism, and she faced the danger without fear, but even the most courageous may have the feeling of fear *after* the deed. All this is natural, human, and yet full of the most genuine pathos. The greatness of the poet is revealed in the very simplicity of the treatment.

The confidence of our heroine is not misplaced; the king responds to her noble trust, but that he can afford to do so is due to the circumstance that the statue of the goddess is to remain in Tauris, it having been found that the healing of Orestes does not depend on its removal.

Here we are at the point when the striking originality of Goethe's treatment of the fable most clearly appears.

Unlike the Greek poet, Goethe brings about the return of Iphigenia to Greece by other than mechanical means;

not by a theft that gains nothing from being approved by a god, and by no machinery that transports a deity upon the stage, to further the action. To make his own solution of the problem possible, Goethe had to change the oracle, which is made to use the general term "sister," for the specific "sister of Apollo." This shows the oracle as equivocal, but so much more in accord with the well-known character of oracles. "The sister" could have meant the sister of Apollo, and equally the sister of Orestes. But another difficulty remained. How was the true meaning of the oracle to be ascertained? The answer is, by the very effect of "the sister" on Orestes, that is, by the effect of the personality of Iphigenia on Orestes in the recognition in the third act.

It is not difficult to see how true this is. *Orestes* is healed from his maddening torment in consequence of the meeting with his sister. Finding that the madness does not return, he naturally infers, though not at once, that what the oracle really meant was not the statue of the goddess, but the company of his living sister. The importance of this discovery, in view of a purely natural solution of the difficulty, is apparent. The King could not have consented to let the statue go, for, according to both Greek and Barbarian belief, he would, by so doing, have exposed his country and himself to the greatest dangers. But in allowing Iphigenia to depart, great as his sorrow at the parting is, he only kept a promise and ran no risk in respect to the safety of his people. That he kept his promise shows him a man of noble qualities, who well might have aspired to the hand of Iphigenia.

Goethe has shown remarkable skill in using the mytho-

logical and legendary elements of the story in such a way that they heighten the interest of his drama without ever conflicting with its natural and rational progress. His characters are sincere in their belief in the mythical history of their race and their actions are primarily determined by this belief, but, while so determined, they accord with inherent mental qualities, and the real dramatic conflict is due, not to the fanciful or absurd working of a false belief, but to their natural conceptions of the right and of duty.

The belief that the removal of the statue was imposed by the oracle was necessary for the progress of the dramatic action and its culmination in the heroism of Iphigenia, while, but for the healing of Orestes in the third act, the conclusion of the drama, as we know it, would have been impossible.

The scene in which Iphigenia reveals to the king the truth of what is plotted against him recalls a similar scene from the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles. Philoctetes had attracted the anger of a goddess. An incurable wound caused him to be abandoned by the Greeks on the island of Lemnos, in their expedition to Troy. Neoptolemus succeeds in gaining the confidence of the wretched man, through a lie, by the urgent advice of Ulysses, and, finally, possession of his miraculous bow — the bow of Hercules — his only means to make existence possible in his solitude. The Greeks cannot conquer Troy without this bow — so the oracle has said — and Ulysses has offered to procure it through young Neoptolemus. Under pretense of taking Philoctetes to his home in Attica, Neoptolemus obtains the bow, but, at the moment of entering the boat, such a terrible paroxysm of pain overcomes the suffering man that the heart of Neop-

tolemus is moved. He reveals the truth and offers to redeem his original promise to take the sufferer home to Attica. Ulysses cannot move him from this purpose. Troy apparently cannot be taken, unless a divinity interferes. It is again a theatrical device, the machine-god, *Deus ex machina* which disentangles the knot. Hercules appears, and at his bidding Philoctetes accompanies Neoptolemus to Troy.

The sympathy which Greek shows for Greek in the play of Sophocles is shown by a Greek for a barbarian in Goethe's drama. While in the Greek play the act of Neoptolemus is without effect on the solution of the drama, the act of Iphigenia is indispensable to the solution of the German drama. And further, Iphigenia actually suffers when she tries to carry out the stratagem. She cannot do what Pylades (who so far resembles Ulysses in the drama of Sophocles) has suggested to her, and *she does not do it.* It is not pity that determines her final action. An inherent hatred of falsehood and the purity of her soul make her willing to risk anything rather than to act ignobly. Finally, the generous confession and offer of Neoptolemus do not expose him to great personal risk,[1] while Iphigenie stakes everything that is dear to her in the heroic revelation of her true personality. The influence of Sophocles on Goethe is undeniable. Though adhering more strictly to the orthodox faith of his ancestors, Sophocles surpasses Euripides in moral earnestness. It was Sophocles who said:

"Be not afraid; speak thou the truth, and then thou shalt not fail." (Soph., *Fragments*, 526.)

[1] Neoptolemus and Philoctetes had the "bow of Hercules" to defend themselves from the revenge of the Greeks.

and again:

"Deceit is base, unfit for noble souls." (*Ibid.* 77.)

and:

"A righteous tongue has with it mightiest strength."
(*Ibid.* 78) *Campbell's edition.*

In his *Antigone*, sisterly affection and love of truth are set forth with great poetic art, and everywhere, often under the garb of the most absurd superstitions, his moral earnestness makes itself felt. We may therefore say that the character of Goethe's Iphigenia shows her Greek origin, but that her sympathies are extended beyond Greece to the Barbarian, and thus reveal a higher civilization.

IV. THE HEALING OF ORESTES, AND THE "CURSE" IN GOETHE'S TREATMENT.

The ingenious Genevese, Victor Cherbuliez, a distinguished French author and member of the French Academy, once spoke of Goethe as "the only poet, who is at the same time a great philosopher, and the only philosopher who is at the same time a great poet." Goethe himself repudiated the term "philosopher" as applied to himself, in so far as it meant a professional follower of a distinct school of philosophy.[1] But the better he becomes known, the more universal grows the belief that Goethe ranks among the greatest thinkers of all times. At the same time he had the imagination found only in the greatest poets, and with such quali-

[1] "Von der Philosophie habe ich mich selbst immer frei erhalten; der Standpunkt des gesunden Menschenverstandes war auch der meinige." *Gespräche mit Eckermann. 4 Feb., 1829.*

ties he could touch no object without leaving on it the stamp of his genius. This is remarkably the case in his treatment of the mythological elements in the story of Iphigenia.

The Greek dramatists were at once favored and restricted by the myths and legends which were known by the whole people, and on which all their dramas were founded. It may, in fact, be said that the Greek drama was the special organ through which the Greek people were kept in touch with their legendary history, and by which they were made acquainted with the nature of their gods. In this sense we notice a change from Æschylus to Euripides that is remarkable. It may be illustrated by the one fact that with the former poet the Furies are personally introduced on the stage, while Euripides never allows them to appear. A few quotations from the *Orestes* of this poet will show this very conclusively. In his frenzy Orestes cries out:

> "Ὦ μῆτερ, ἱκετεύω σε, μὴ 'πίσειέ μοι
> τὰς αἱματωποὺς καὶ δρακοντώδεις κόρας·
> αὗται γὰρ αὗται πλησίον θρώσκουσί μου."
>
> Euripides, *Orestes*, ll. 255–257.

> "Ah Mother! Do not set thy Furies on me!
> See, how their fiery eye-balls glare in blood,
> And wreathing snakes hiss in their horrid hair!
> There, there they stand, ready to leap upon me!"
>
> *Potter's Translation.*

To this awful appeal his sister answers:

> "Μέν,' ὦ ταλαίπωῤ, ἀτρέμα σοῖς ἐν δεμνίοις
> ὁρᾷς γὰρ οὐδὲν ὧν δοκεῖς σάφ' εἰδέναι."
>
> *Ibid.*, ll. 258–259.

"Rest thee, poor brother, rest thee on thy bed:
Thou seest them not: *'tis fancy's coinage all.*"

The same thought is repeated later on. Electra says to Orestes:

"— — ἀλλὰ κλῖνον εἰς εὐνὴν δέμας,
καὶ μὴ τὸ ταρβοῦν κἀκφοβοῦν σ'ἐκ δεμνίων
ἄγαν ἀποδέχου, μένε δ'ἐπὶ στρωτοῦ λέχους.
κἂν μὴ νοσῇς γὰρ, ἀλλὰ δοξάζῃς νοσεῖν,
κάματος βροτοῖσιν ἀπορία τε γίγνεται."

Ibid., ll. 311–315.

"— recline thee on thy couch,
Nor let these *visionary errors* frighten thee;
There rest: though all be *fancy's coinage wild*,
Yet nature sinks beneath the violent toil."

Potter's Translation.

Hence, whatever Orestes believes that he sees, in his sister's view there is nothing but idle fancies without reality behind them.

Goethe very probably had this scene in mind when he represented Iphigenia (ll. 1325-26), in her prayer to Diana, as saying: "Oh, do not let my only brother rave in the gloom of madness." The words of Orestes (ll. 1052–1070; 1124–1138) also recall this scene, though only in its general suggestiveness.

In another sense Euripides shows his ethical advance over Æschylus, and even over Sophocles. With him, the goddess is not bloodthirsty. She has never really demanded the sacrifice of Iphigenia, but protects and shelters her.

Goethe went much further than Euripides in humanizing the harsh features of Greek mythology, but if this should appear to some as a fault, the example of Euripides may be

cited to justify him. For, if the fault exists, it is as great in the case of Euripides in comparison with Æschylus, as it is in the case of Goethe in comparison with Euripides. But why call it a fault? — it deserves rather to be named an advance.

The difference was pointed out by a great classical scholar, Gottfried Hermann, who remarked, in the beginning of this century, of Goethe's *Iphigenia:* "Goethe has vied with the Athenian poet in such a way that we seem indeed to hear a man of Grecian birth, but one who, refined by the culture of our own age, not only is filled with a purer and loftier ideal of virtue, but tries to please us rather by the power and wealth of his ideas than by the elegance and variety of his words and metric forms." [1]

If we could conceive of a poet like Sophocles or Euripides as having progressed under the influence of our modern Christian civilization, to the point of view of a modern poet and thinker like Goethe, we might conclude that such a modern Greek would have treated the subject very much as Goethe treated it.

It is in this sense only that Goethe can be called an imitator or successor of the Greeks. It is in the same sense in which Euripides is an imitator of Æschylus or of Sophocles. In other words, the more than two thousand years that lie between Sophocles and Goethe

[1] — ita ille (i.e. Goethe) Atheniensem poetà emulatus, ut hominem natione Graecum, sed eum talem audire videamur, qui nostri aevi cultu eruditus non solum virtutis puriorem excelsioremque imaginem animo impressam habeat, sed etiam oblectandi materiam magis ex sententiarum vi et copia, quam ex verborum ornatu et varietate numerorum depromat. Preface to the *Iphigenia Taurica* of Euripides.

account for the different treatment that Goethe has given to the subject.[1]

It is, of course, evident that Christianity can have no special mention in a drama that treats of events in early Greece, but it is nevertheless true that, but for the influence of the religious teaching of Jesus, the *Iphigenia* of Goethe would not have been written.

A very distinguished follower of the philosopher Kant, Kuno Fischer, has expressed the opinion that the suffering of Iphigenia bears some similarity, though only in a purely human way, to a Christ-deed, that is, an act of expiation by means of vicarious suffering. The main part of his argument is in the following extract: "A perfectly unalloyed and pure soul that has no guilt of her own, feels and suffers the guilt of those whom she loves and whom she wishes to *free from their misery, relieve of their guilt,*[2] and lead to a new and purified life. If those others whom such a soul loves are the entire human race, then this vicarious and redeeming suffering amounts to a Christ-deed (*Christusthat*). . . . In our poem it is the race of Tantalus that needs redemption (*Entsühnung*). From this race there has arisen *one* soul who, perfectly pure and guiltless, has no share in the passions which have destroyed her house, in the crimes which have sprung from these passions, but who, for this reason, knows these crimes to their very roots; and as she loves this guilty race, it is she who bears and suffers in behalf of the others a feeling of guilt."

The view here presented is open to grave question. Was

[1] In the excellent edition of the *Iphigenia among the Tauri* of Euripides, by Isaac Flagg, the same idea is expressed. Boston, 1896.

[2] The Italics are not in the original.

it really the view the poet held? Goethe was anything rather than a mystic. Emerson says of him: "He lays a ray of light under every fact, between himself and his dearest property." He was an admirer and student of nature, a forerunner of the great theory of evolution. It is not likely, speaking generally, on the basis of these facts, that he would be so inconsistent as to introduce a mystical element into the drama.

Two facts stand out prominently in his drama and should be well noticed. The first: *that the suffering of Iphigenia in no sense frees any of the acting members of the drama from bearing the consequences of their own guilt.* The other: *that her very suffering was the cause of all the subsequent sin and suffering in the family.*

We must distinguish between the *belief* of the sinning and suffering persons in the drama, and the real connection, or the lack of it; between a supposed curse and the afflictions that are attributed to it. The curse is mythical, the suffering is real. If it had been the poet's intention to treat that curse as more than an old story, as a reality in the sense in which it was treated by the Greeks, then his solution of the psychological problem would be a mistake, for that solution is based on the pure humanity of the acting persons, and in it the curse counts for absolutely nothing. It is very necessary to grasp this distinction, if we wish to have a clear idea of the striking originality of our poet in the treatment of a subject which was hackneyed, and which through him has acquired an entirely new significance.

In her first dialogue with King Thoas, Iphigenia speaks of herself as an "accursed being" (*verwünschtes Haupt*). But the king is skeptical and answers: "It would not be easy

to convince me that I have been protecting in you a guilty being." And when Iphigenia insists, he retorts: "No blessing rests on what we do to reprobates," since Iphigenia has been a blessing to him and his country.

She now communicates to him the legendary history of her race. She speaks of the terrible punishment of Tantalus, inflicted by the gods, and exclaims: "Alas, and our entire race bore their hatred." But *hatred* differs from a curse in the Greek acceptation of the term; a curse is undefinable and mysterious, and *must be removed by an act of propitiation or expiation.* In the play of Euripides this is effected by carrying the statue of Artemis to Greece. Unless so removed, the curse remains. But in Goethe's drama the curse needs no propitiation; only a pure heart is needed to make it vanish entirely.[1]

There is a very definite meaning attached to the curse in the Greek play: it is the curse of Myrtilus who was hurled into the sea by Pelops, and, dying, pronounced a curse upon the entire race of his murderer. Nothing is more indefinite than the sense in which Goethe uses the word.

[1] The prose version is fully as explicit on this point as the lines 1694, etc.

> "Soll dieser Fluch denn ewig walten?
> — — — Nimmt doch alles ab!"
> Das beste Glück, des Lebens schönste Kraft
> Ermattet endlich, warum nicht der Fluch?"

This is modern thinking. In the prose version we read: "Vergebens hofft ich still verwahrt von meiner Göttin den alten Fluch von unserm Haus *ausklingen* zu lassen, und durch Gebet und Reinheit die Olympier zu versühnen."

The poet nowhere intimates that the "suffering" of Iphigenia has anything whatever to do with the final cessation of the curse.

That it was Goethe's intention to present the idea of a curse as merely a matter of tradition and belief, and not as a reality on which the progress and outcome of his drama depends, appears in various parts of the latter. Iphigenia asks: "Everything wanes, why not a curse?" (l. 1696.) She compares the strength of a curse to the gradually decreasing strength of fortune and of life itself. After she has told the story of her house to the king, he asks: "Tell me now, by what a miracle you yourself have sprung from this wild race?" The king's question is perfectly natural and all the more suggestive because Iphigenia is unable to answer it in any other way than by praising her father, the pattern of a perfect man. All the members of her family whom she knows are endowed with reason and sensibility. As for Orestes he is a young man of generous instincts, pious and brave. He did not avenge his father from savage impulse, but in the belief that he was performing an absolute and sacred duty.[1]

The suffering of Orestes is therefore not so much remorse, as rather the physical impression of his mother's agony and death which his memory conjures up. He is the victim of a horrible superstition, *but this superstition is his religion.*

The question has been discussed whether Orestes acted solely from a belief in the oracle, or whether the unwritten law of revenge also impelled him. A recent writer[2] denies

[1] Cf l. 710. Goethe uses the mildest word, "a hint of the deity," for the strong command as found in Æschylus, but this latter must be supposed to be implied.

[2] See the discussion in the *Zeitschrift für deutschen Unterricht*, 1898, 12: 2 and 3, pages 209-212, by Fraerichs, Althaus and others.

that the Greeks believed in *Blutrache;* i. e. that sort of murder which avenges the death of a relative. It is however plain that the practice was certainly believed by Homer and the Greek tragic poets, to exist, or to have existed. Homer says: "For a scorn this is even for the ears of men unborn to hear, if we avenge not ourselves on the slayers of our sons and of our brethren." (Homer, *Odyss.*: 24, 432 ff.)

Goethe's Iphigenia recognizes the fact when she speaks of her infant brother as the "fair child destined to become, in the future, the *avenger* of his father." (ll. 976–78.)

We need not go so far as to believe that the ancient Greeks had a custom like the Corsican *Blutrache,* known as "vendetta;" but we cannot fail to recognize that the Homeric Greeks (and the persons of our drama are almost contemporaneous with them), freely and ferociously practised the barbarous law of retribution in kind, that is of *Blutrache.* It forms the principal event of Homer's *Iliad;* for though that event turns on the death of a friend, and not of a relative, the spirit of the revenge is the same.

In the Eumenides of Æschylus the chorus charges Apollo with having been, not a mere accomplice in the deed of matricide by Orestes, but rather the *sole author* of it. He answers: "Ἔρχησα ποινὰς τοῦ πατρὸς πέμψαι. Τί μήν;" "I said (through the oracle) that *he must avenge his father.* Why not?" The god only enjoined what already was the practice of the people; this appears from his question Τί μήν, *Why not?* Schultz' edition, l. 198.

The inconsistency pointed out by the king's question finds a parallel in some remark of Pylades. Orestes complains that wherever he goes, even in the most healthful

places, the blooming faces around him soon betray the features of pain indicating a slow death. But Pylades, his constant companion, is full of courage and health, *how then can what Orestes says be true?* (ll. 660–65.) And when Orestes further tells him: "Believe me, they (the gods) have a spite against the house of Tantalus, and I, the last one of that house, am not to pass away guiltless and with honor —" Pylades answers: "*The gods do not avenge the crime of the fathers on the son;* each one, be he good or wicked, takes away his reward along with his deed. The blessing of parents, not their curse is transmitted." There is more in this than an individual opinion of one of the characters of the piece. Pylades, as well as Thoas, is an unprejudiced witness and judge. The subjective and morbid impressions of Iphigenia and Orestes have no effect on them. Considering all these facts we may find it no longer possible to look upon a mysterious mission of Iphigenia to free from their misery, *relieve of their guilt*, any member of her family, simply on the strength of her *innocent suffering*.

We see only a connection of cause and effect that reaches from the intended sacrifice of Iphigenia in Aulis to the meeting of brother and sister in Tauris, and their joint return to Greece. The principal links in this chain are, omitting the arrival of Iphigenia in Tauris as outside the scope of our drama, the healing of Orestes and the courageous act of Iphigenia in confessing to the king the contemplated flight. There is the closest possible connection between the two. Orestes is seized by a terrible, but final paroxysm upon the recognition of his sister. Her voice and her looks, as he turns his attention more closely to her, recall to him his mother. He sinks fainting to the ground.

When he rises again he fancies himself to be in the lower world, but what he imagines he sees, comforts him. Father and mother are united again; there is no enmity in that lower world; he greets the shades of the departed, and mournfully misses the ancestor of the race. In this condition his sister and his friend come to him. Thus the poet represents the healing of Orestes. The personality of his sister, a most sweet and noble woman, to whom he feels drawn by an irresistible impulse, supplants the image of terror which had driven him to madness. *Es löset sich der Fluch, mir sagt's das Herz* (l. 1358).

Had the poet adhered to the idea of a curse in the Greek sense, he would have been compelled to have recourse to a mechanical solution, that is, the removal to Greece either of his sister, or else of the statue, *before the healing of Orestes could have been effected.* That he did not choose such a solution proves that he did not wish to adhere to that idea. It is for this reason that the third act in which the healing of Orestes is presented deserves the appellation Goethe has given it: "The axis of the piece."[1]

In this connection we must again admire the art of the poet in making use of the mythological element. Orestes has faith in the oracle, and this faith, though it does not apparently raise his hopes of recovery, yet contributes to the healing process. This faith has led him to the Taurian

[1] In a letter from Rome, dated Jan. 8, 1786, we read that Angelika Kaufmann had made a drawing of Orestes' meeting with his sister and friend at the fancied descent into the lower world. The poet adds: "It is another proof of her delicate appreciation and of her ability to appropriate to herself whatever is in her line. And it is really the axis of the piece." (*Schriften der Goethe Gesellschaft*, II, p. 429.)

shore. He finds there his sister, and his faith in the oracle gains strength from this fact. Believing in a divine guidance, though beset by doubts and fearing the worst, every new experience strengthens his faith and helps the process of his delivery from the madness. In like manner it is the firm faith of Iphigenia in the beneficent character of the Olympian gods that gives her the necessary strength to be true to herself and thus prove a blessing to others. But the spirit of a pure humanity pervades the whole, and it is humanity that works the redemption. In his old age the poet gave expression to this idea in a verse written on the flyleaf of a copy of his drama which he presented to the actor Krüger, after a very successful representation of it in Weimar. We may thus translate it: —

"What in hope and faith the poet
Here revealed on many a page,
May the actor's art bestow it
On his people from the stage!
May he lovingly endeavor
Thus to make the lesson known:
Pure humanity can ever
For all human faults atone."[1]

The poet puts us on the dividing line of ancient and modern civilization. The ancient form is dying — the new

[1] "Was der Dichter diesem Bande
Glaubend, hoffend anvertraut
Werd' im Kreise deutscher Lande
Durch des Künstlers Worte laut.
So im Handeln, so im Sprechen
Liebevoll verkünd' es laut:
Alle menschliche Gebrechen
Sühnet reine Menschlichkeit."

is coming on. Thus all that is noble, grand and beautiful in human nature, and, at the same time, all that is weak, impulsive and brutal, is vividly brought before us. Iphigenia, the exquisitely finished type of true human nobility, yet falters under the great temptation to save the life of her dearest at the cost of marring her own heavenly pure nature. She is the victim of the barbarous usages of the past, but she triumphs over the influences that would drag her down. In her view the new time has dawned when men will be no longer subject to coarse superstition, blindly doing its bidding and fanatically carrying out its grim behests.

In this condition was Orestes, following the impulse, as well as the unwritten law of barbarism, he commits a terrible deed, he kills his mother; thus, in the language of the original version of the poem, becoming "the unheard-of avenger of an unheard-of deed of shame." But Diana, the sister of the god whose oracle had commanded the deed, has averted the sacrifice of the maiden. She is reserved in order to save by her character the family of which she is a member. There is no room here for the operation of a "curse" in the Greek sense. That curse belonged to the barbarism which is now swept away by the current of nobler thoughts and feelings as revealed in the character of Iphigenia. In this sense the drama is "incredibly modern." It is based on pure humanity, and the specters of a barbarous age figure in it only as shadows which make the beauty of a new civilization stand out in greater radiance.

V. THE GENESIS OF THE DRAMA.

The poet was not yet thirty when he wrote his *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, in prose, in the space of six weeks, beginning the dictation of it February 14 and completing it March 28, 1779.[1] Through the efforts of the Goethe Gesellschaft all the material that can throw light on the work of composition is now available, but as yet only a hint has been found as to the time when the idea of the work first entered Goethe's mind, and this hint is not found in any of the papers which the society has published. In his *Mittheilungen über Goethe*, Riemer, the poet's former secretary, reports that Goethe, in 1831, had told him of an inscription, which stated: "Schwalbenstein bei Ilmenau, March 19, 1779. *Sereno die, quieta mente* I wrote, after a choice of three years, the fourth act of my *Iphigenia* in one day." (Vol. ii, p. 83 of the *Mittheilungen.*)[2]

The fourth act is so essential in its bearing on the fundamental idea which gives the work its great originality that we may well conclude, if Riemer's statement is correct, that not only the subject of this act, but the whole drama must have occupied the poet for the space of three years, if not longer.

The entry in Goethe's diary, which was made on the

[1] *Werke*, IV, ii, 282.

[2] Professor Buchheim and other editors make Riemer say that Goethe *dictated* this to him as his *secretary*. But Riemer had long ceased to be his secretary, and he gives this out in a note. Another recent editor adds to the above statement of Buchheim: "This is confirmed by an entry in his journal on March 19, 1779." But the entry — which is well known — contains *not a word* about a "choice," or "deliberation." Cf. Riemer, *Mittheilungen*, vol. ii, p. 83.

same day, has only: "Alone on the Schwalbenstein — wrote the fourth act of *Iphigenia*." (*Werke* III, i, 83.)

It has been questioned whether Riemer had properly understood the remark. K. J. Schröer, in the introduction to the drama, in his edition of the poet's complete works, has discussed this point, and also the probable time when the idea of the composition first shaped itself in Goethe's mind. H. Grimm (in his *Vorlesungen über Goethe*), Erich Schmidt and other modern specialists in Goethe lore have given attention to the subject, but it may suffice here to state that as early as the summer of 1775 Goethe had unquestionably the thought of Orestes and the Furies in his mind. On July 20 he had returned from a trip to Switzerland, and on August 17 he wrote to a friend, Frau Karsch, describing his feelings and using the expression: "The invisible scourge of the Eumenides will very likely drive me once more (*wieder*) out of my native country." We must infer, therefore, that his visit to Switzerland was due to the same cause, the necessity seemingly imposed upon him of breaking his engagement with Lili Schönemann.

He speaks of his condition as an "Orestes situation." Whether he had been reading Euripides, Voltaire or Gotter, it is clear that the story of Orestes occupied him. H. Grimm thinks that Gluck's opera, "*Iphigénie en Aulide*," based on Racine's tragedy, may have turned his attention to a continuation of the subject,[1] but as the opera does not deal with the subject of Orestes, it is less likely to have influenced the poet than Gotter's *Electra* which had been recently published, and which, it is safe to

[1] H. Grimm, *Goethe*, 2d ed., p. 269.

say, Goethe, as a friend of the author or translator, was among the first to read.

Perhaps no more was needed to suggest to him the subject of his drama than a certain fancied similarity of his condition with the fate of Orestes in the dramas of Voltaire and Götter, and the appearance in his life of a woman who freed him from his torment, as Iphigenia does Orestes in his own drama. This woman was the Baroness Charlotte von Stein, or Frau von Stein, as she is usually called.

While yet a student at Strassburg he had written under a silhouette of this lady — which had come into his possession by a rare chance, for he had never seen her. — "It would be a glorious spectacle to see how the world is mirrored in this soul. She sees the world as it is, and yet through the medium of love."

He met her soon after his arrival in Weimar, where the young duke had invited him to reside as his friend and adviser (from November 7, 1775). Although more than six years older than the poet, and the mother of seven children, she exercised upon him, from the first, a most remarkable influence.

His own sister, Cornelia, until then the confidant of his heart, had recently married. His new friend combined in her person all the womanly charm which he had found in his own dearly beloved sister ; a friendship grew up between them such as the world has but rarely seen. The resemblance to the Iphigenia of his drama extended even to the difference in his age. To his fancy she may well have appeared another Iphigenia so long as he saw in himself another Orestes.

At the time when Goethe came to Weimar he was still

haunted by the memory of his inconstancy toward Friederika Brion, the rustic maiden of Sesenheim who had charmed his student fancy. Then too, a more recent tie, his engagement to Lili Schönemann, the daughter of a wealthy Frankfurt banker, had for various worldly reasons just been broken.

These memories were fresh and painful; he still felt his loss keenly and was not free from self-accusation, which suggested to him the torments of Orestes. In this condition he met Frau von Stein. The ascendancy she soon gained over him was such that he could not but think of the past as of little consequence in comparison with the present. She was for him the soothing one (*Besänftigerin*) "who traced his every nerve and quieted his turbulent blood." The inference is permitted, judging from his letters and other written evidence, that he was deeply convinced of having now met the type of a woman who satisfied the deepest aspirations of his soul, and that his earlier attachments were due to illusion. In this he may have been wrong and, besides, Frau von Stein could never be his, as she belonged to another. But he worshipped in her the perfection of womanhood, and the lines in his *Tasso* which she had a right to refer to herself:[1]

> "Whatever echoes in my songs resound,
> I owe them all to one, to only one!
> No mentally uncertain image hovers
> Before my brow. —"
>
> *Tasso* II, 516 ff.

[1] April 19, 1771, Goethe writes to her: "As you want to appropriate to yourself all that *Tasso* says, I have already written so much to you today that I cannot get beyond or above it."

and again:—

"When in thy praise, in gratitude to thee
My heart speaks out, 'tis then that I enjoy
The purest happiness that man can feel;
The most divine I learned alone in thee!"

Ibid., II, 38.

are only a rhythmical expression of many a passage in his letters to her.[1] Written during a period of ten years, from his first acquaintance with her, they contain some of the most deeply felt utterances of the soul life of our poet, or of any poet.

With the aid of the letters, and the entries in his diary which bear on the subject, we may now trace the progress of the composition to the final re-casting, which the poet gave his drama in Italy.

The first mention is in his diary, February 14, 1779 (*Werke*, III, i, 79): "Early in the morning I commenced to dictate *Iphigenia*."

In the evening of the same day he writes to Frau von Stein: "I have been brooding all day long over *Iphigenia*, so that my head is quite unsettled, though I slept last night ten hours by way of a fine preparation. . . . Good night, dearest. I ordered some music to temper the soul and free the spirits." (IV iv, 11.)

February 22 he writes to the same: ". . . . My soul is gradually gaining its freedom, under the influence of the lovely music, from the bonds of records and papers. A

[1] These letters are published in vol. iv of the Weimar edition. They were also published under the title, *Goethe's Briefe an Frau von Stein mit dem Tagebuch aus Italien.* Einleitung von K. Heinemann. Stuttgart.

quartet is playing in the green-room, next to the one where I sit and am gently calling to my side the distant forms."

An entry in his diary, February 24, says: "In the evening, dreaming of *Iphigenia*." (III, i, 80.)

On March 1, another entry: "In the evening alone. *Iphigenia*." (III, i, 80.)

On the same day, in a note to Frau von Stein: "My piece is making progress."

On the second, to the same, from Dornburg: "You may tell von Knebel that the piece is gaining shape and developing limbs." (IV, iv, 13.)

He had started on a tour of inspection, as President of the Recruiting and Causeway Commission, to which office the duke had appointed him. His entry in the diary of the same date states: "Examined the Rothenstein road; in the afternoon the Dornburg road. Afterwards alone in the new château, at work on *Iphigenia*." (III, i, 82.) An entry of the next day shows him still at Dornburg, at work on his piece during that day. On the fourth he writes to Frau von Stein, from the Dornburg château (or villa): "I still hope that, when I get home, on the eleventh or twelfth, my piece will be done." (IV, iv, 13.)

On March 5, from Apolda, to von Knebel: "I must confess to you that, as a perambulating poet, I have been extremely ill used, and had I not had the two days in the quiet and exceedingly lovely villa of Dornburg, the egg half hatched would have addled." (IV, iv, 16.)

On the sixth, from the same place: ". . . Here the drama won't progress at all. It is too bad. The King of Tauris is to speak as if no weaver in Apolda were starving." (IV, iv. 18.) (In a previous entry of his

diary he also refers to the deplorable condition of the poor weavers.)

On the seventh, again, in a letter to Frau von Stein, he speaks of his drama, one scene of which gave him particular trouble, and of the difficulties under which he wrote. (IV, iv, 19.)

On the ninth, after some entries on business, his diary contains the following: "In the evening alone. Put the three acts into shape." (III, i, 83.)

In Buttstädt, von Knebel had found him before a table covered with papers — the conscription lists — and among them the manuscript of *Iphigenia.*

On March 13, when back in Weimar, he read the three acts to the duke and von Knebel, as an entry states. (III, i, 83.)

On the nineteenth we have the entry: "Alone on the Schwalbenstein; wrote the fourth act of *Iphigenia.*"

On March 28: ". . . In the evening I finished *Iphigenia.*" And on March 29: "A mad day — ever since 5 A.M. Read *Iphigenia* aloud (to a small company). All this time I was like the weather — serene, pure, cheerful." (III, i, 84.)

He had counted on von Knebel to take the part of King Thoas in the representation of the piece. It seems that von Knebel refused. This led to a remonstrance from the poet, which wound up with the words: "But if your repugnance is invincible, the work may, with other more serious plans and hopes, sink into the silent depths of the sea." (IV, iv, 22.)

Soon after its completion, the play was presented in the private theatre of the duke (April 9, 1779), the poet acting the part of Orestes, Prince Constantine that of Pylades,

Major von Knebel of Thoas, Secretary Seidel of Arkas, while the beautiful actress, Corona Schrœter, took the part of Iphigenia. On April 12 and July 12 repetitions took place. At the latter date the duke himself appeared in the part of Pylades. An eye-witness wrote this at the time: "Goethe in Greek costume — an Apollo descended from heaven to embody the beauty of Greece, and to give life to it by his words! Never was there seen such a complete union of mental and physical perfection."

The drama, as it then was, did not fully satisfy Goethe. He wished to give it another form, and probably caused a copy to be made in which the text is arranged in irregular lines by a mere mechanical division, thus producing an effect, owing to the predominance of the rhythmic element in the original form, somewhat similar to the irregular iambics in which Wieland wrote his *Alcestis*. A copy was made by Lavater. It has been printed in the Weimar edition. (Bd. 39, p. 483.)[1]

Victor Michels, who attended to the publication of the first form, and also of this second form,[2] quotes Boas as holding the belief that the latter was the immediate preliminary step to the final complete form which the poet gave the drama in Italy. But whether he used this form, or another that was similar to it, it is at least doubtful that either the one or the other was made by Goethe himself. Victor Michels questions it as to the second form, and, as to the other, which Goethe took to Carlsbad and Italy, we only

[1] In Bächtold's *Goethe's Iphigenie in vierfacher Gestalt* it is marked "B."

[2] The question is carefully discussed by Victor Michels in Bd. 39, pp. 454 ff.

know that he caused his secretary, Seidel, to make a copy for him after the manuscript of the first version had been with Wieland, to whom Frau von Stein had sent it at the request of the poet. It is highly probable that the example of Wieland's *Alcestis* and the influence of his conversation made Goethe think of putting his drama in a rhythmic dress resembling that of the *Alcestis*. But before he came to this conclusion he spent some time on the improvement of the original prose version. This we learn from two entries in his journal. The first entry is on August 4, 1781: "Corrected *Iphigenia*." August 19, "Examined my *Iphigenia*." (III, i, 128, 131.) In November he reports the revision as finished. (IV, v, 225.)

As early as October 13, 1780, he had written to Lavater (IV, iv, 318): "I do not like to have my *Iphigenia* copied repeatedly and circulated, because I am at work giving it more harmony of style, and, therefore, making several changes." And again to the same, November 26, 1781: "You had asked for a copy of my *Iphigenia* for General Koch. I refused it, because I wished to revise it once more. This has been done, but, unfortunately, being situated as I am, only superficially. . . . Towards Christmas a copy may be ready." (IV, v, 225.) To F. H. Jacoby he writes (IV, vi, 92): " . . . My work is not a worthy fulfilment of old hopes." As late as March, 1783 (IV, vi, 136), he requests Kestner "not to let his copy be seen, in order to prevent portions of it from getting into the public." Among the earliest evidences of his working at the revision is a letter to Frau von Stein, April 17, 1781 (IV, v, 113): " . . . Crone (Corona Schröter) is with me to-day. I have been making some changes in the version of my *Iphigenia*,

and in her company shall do more of the kind." His anxiety to prevent a copy of the manuscript from getting among the public was due to two reasons. In spite of all care, parts of it had been published by unauthorized publishers, and the work had not yet assumed that form which his poetic and artistic instinct demanded.[1]

In order to put a stop to the abuse of unauthorized publications he had arranged for the publication of his collected works by Gœschen. *Iphigenia* was to appear in the third volume, in 1786 or early 1787, and it was in order to have a satisfactory copy ready that he seriously commenced, in the summer of 1786, to contemplate the production of a metric version. It was for this purpose that he submitted it to Wieland, who, as he wrote Frau von Stein, "knew what to do with it." The copy which he took to Carlsbad was very likely the result of his consultations with Wieland, and also with Herder. Writing from Carlsbad, August 23, he says: "Divided into verses, as it now is, the piece pleases me much better. One can also see more readily where improvements are called for. I am at work on it and hope to finish it to-morrow." (IV, viii, 7.)

August 27, he writes to Frau von Stein: ". . . Herder helps me faithfully — there is a good deal of work being done on *Iphigenia*. The work progresses (*es macht sich*), and I hope it will turn out fairly well." (IV, viii, 10.) On August 30, to the same: ". . . Herder helps me faithfully, and by Saturday all will be done. I shall feel very much at ease when I am seated in the carriage. Towards the last I was almost driven wild, the task was too great.

[1] This improved prose version appears as "C" with Bächtold (*Iphigenie in vierfacher Gestalt*).

Much has been changed in the *Iphigenia*." (IV, viii, 12.) But either on the following day, or at least, not much later, he wrote to Herder: "I got into great trouble, which I must at once communicate to you. After you left me I spent some time in reading the *Electra* of Sophocles. The long iambic lines without cæsura, and the odd revolving and rolling of the period, have become so fixed in my mind that the short lines of my *Iphigenia* appear to me now quite rocky, unmelodious and unreadable. I commenced at once to alter the first scene. However, in order that I may not go too far, and that we may fix a measure and a limit, I ask you for a lesson at about five o'clock. I shall call on you." (IV, viii, 13.)

Here stops the direct correspondence on German soil in reference to the further progress of the work. Goethe, without returning to Weimar, suddenly started for Italy, September 3. Italy was to him the promised land. His longing for this country, the home of the fine arts, was akin to the longing of Iphigenia for Greece and the words of his heroine: —

> "Und an dem Ufer steh' ich lange Tage,
> Das Land der Griechen mit der Seele suchend"

were symbolical of his own feelings.

VI. THE WORK ON IPHIGENIA IN ITALY.

Herder had advised Goethe to take his manuscript along, on his journey to Italy, as we learn from an entry in the journal which he kept for Frau von Stein: "Munich, Sept. 6, 1786. There is yet another piece of hard work (*böse Arbeit*) in store for me. As a result of my last consulta-

tion with Herder I had to take *Iphigenia* along, and now I must revise it, whenever an occasion offers, and at least devote a few days to it. And this I will do just as soon as I find a little nook (*Plätzchen*) where I like to stay."

The question may arise, when did Goethe definitely decide to adopt the regular English blank verse for his drama? We can only surmise that the suggestion came quite naturally from the example of Lessing, who had used this form in his *Nathan*, almost at the exact time when Goethe wrote the first version of his *Iphigenia* in prose. In an entry of his journal, Aug. 21, 1781, we read: "In the evening with Knebel and the duke in the theatre to read *Nathan* (i. e. *Nathan der Weise*). And on the twenty-third: "*Nathan* and *Tasso* were read by way of comparison." (*Nathan und Tasso gegen einander gelesen.*) It was at this time also that he worked at his *Elpenor*, as entries of August 11 and 19 show. It seems highly probable, at any rate, that he did not hesitate, as soon as he reached Italy, to put the whole drama into regular blank verse.

The influence of Herder on Goethe, even at this time, was great. The letters from which these quotations are taken and others which Goethe subsequently wrote to him, abundantly prove this. This influence began in Straussburg, and may account for the poet's becoming interested in the Greek drama after he had passed the period of "Storm and Stress" (*Sturm und Drang*), the outcome of which were the dramas *Goetz von Berlichingen* and *Clavigo*, and the famous novel, *The Sorrows of Werther*. Whether Herder ever directly or indirectly mentioned to him the subject of *Iphigenia* is not known, but in wishing to

account for the origin of this production, as also for his *Tasso*, *Egmont*, *Elpenor* (unfinished), a great allowance for the influence of Herder may safely be made.

The work of re-casting the drama into its permanent rhythmic and final form occupied the poet during the first four months of his stay in Italy. In his *Italienische Reise*, an artistic redaction of letters and journal entries dating from that period, he has left us a description of the gradual progress of the work. His *Tagebuch und Briefe aus Italien an Frau von Stein und Herder* have been separately published by Erich Schmidt in the *Schriften der Goethe Gesellschaft*, 1886. His journals and letters form also an important part of the complete works in the Weimar edition.

"On Lake Garda," says Goethe, in his *Italienische Reise*, "when the powerful south wind drove the waves to the shore, where I was at least as alone as my heroine on the shore of Tauris, I drew the first lines of the new version, continuing the work in Verona, Vicenza, Padua, but most industriously in Venice. Then, however, the work began to lag, nay I was led to a new design, namely, to write an *Iphigenia in Delphi*, and I might have done so at once, had I not been prevented by diversions and by a feeling of duty toward the older piece. In Rome, however, the work was continued with due constancy. In the evening, before I retired, I would prepare for the task of the morning, which was immediately taken up on awakening. My method was quite simple. I copied the piece very calmly, and *allowed it to resound regularly, line for line, period for period*."

Goethe's *Tagebuch* and letters to friends at home furnish many details of the gradual progress of the work,

While passing through the Tyrol, over the Brenner into Italy, when solitude and the grandeur of the scenery appealed to his poetic nature, he had taken the manuscript from the "largest package" and put it into his pocket. At Torbole, on Lake Garda, he made this entry in his journal (Band III, Abtheilung i, p. 182 of Weimar ed.): "Volkmann a (popular guide book of the time) reminds me that this is the *Benacus* of the ancients. He quotes the line of Virgil: —

' — teque
Fluctibus et fremitu assurgens Benace marino. — '

To-day I have worked upon my *Iphigenia*, in the presence of the lake. I got along well."

In Verona he makes the entry: "September 16. I feel tired and exhausted from work, for I have my pen in hand all day long. I must now copy my *Iphigenia* entirely." In Vicenza, a few days later, he says: "I am copying *Iphigenia;* this takes me many an hour, and yet, among the strange people, among the new objects, gives me a certain feeling of something particular (ein "*gewisses Eigentümliches*"), and of an imaginative return *(Rückgefühl)* to my native country."[1] On the eighteenth he writes to the duke (IV, viii, 22): "I am industrious — working at *Iphigenia*. The work is gaining shape (*sie quillt auf*) — the halting meter is changing into continuous harmony. Herder with wonderful patience, has opened my ears for this. I hope to be successful." From Venice he writes

[1] He kept this journal for Frau von Stein, in lieu of letters, but, by an oversight, failed to send it to her. She did not receive it until December, and both suffered greatly, each imagining the other to have grown indifferent.

to Herder (IV, viii, 32): "October 14. I have still a great deal to do on *Iphigenia*. The work is now nearly on the point of a perfect crystallization. The fourth act I am rewriting almost entirely. The passages which are most finished trouble me the most. I would like to put their tender heads under the yoke of the verse without breaking their necks. And yet it is strange that with the improved form there generally comes also a better expression." And again, to Herder and wife: "My work on *Iphigenia* goes on. I have deceived myself in the piece, having imagined the work easier. I must not say what I have done. You will see. (IV, viii, 52.) October 10, he made this entry: "I do not get done with *Iphigenia* — but the work shall lose nothing in my company under this sky." (IV, viii, 52.) And October 22, in Giredo: "And so, then, *Iphigenia* must go with me to Rome. What will become of the little one?" In Bologna he had seen a picture of a St. Agatha which was attributed to Raphael. He writes about it (October 19): "I have imprinted her features on my mind; I shall read to her my *Iphigenia*, and not allow my heroine to say anything which this saint might not wish to utter."

At last, on December 29 and 30, he can rejoice at the finished work. He writes to Herder: "At last I can report to you with joy that my *Iphigenia* is done, and that two copies lie on my table. I would like still to improve a few verses, and for this purpose I shall keep the manuscript yet a few weeks. Then I shall hand it over to you with full power and authority to correct it as you like." (IV, viii, 108.)

On January 13, 1787, he writes again to the same, and two letters the same day. "Here, dear friend, if one can dedicate

and consecrate anything, *Iphigenia* is dedicated and consecrated to you. I have done what time and circumstances permitted, and in doing it, I have learned more than done. Put up with it, and at least rejoice over an obedient disciple" (IV, viii, 133).—Same date: "Here, dear brother, the *Iphigenia*. I send it with to-day's mail to Seidel (Goethe's secretary) and mail this letter to you direct, so that there may be a sort of control. Read it with the ladies, let Frau von Stein see it, and give it your blessing." (IV, viii, 133.)

In his *Italienische Reise*, the poet attributes much of his success to his eccentric friend Moritz.[1] I should never have dared to put my *Iphigenia* into iambics, had not the prosody of Moritz appeared to me like a guiding star. Moritz has managed to find out (*hat herausgeklügelt*) that there is a certain rank of syllables, and that a syllable more important according to its significance is long in comparison with one of less significance, thus making the latter short, but that it may become short in its turn when it stands nearer to another of greater mental weight. He adds: "I have frequently referred to this maxim and found it in harmony with my own feelings."

It is doubtful whether this theory which, it may be admitted, has much in its favor, enabled the poet to give to his poem that noble cast and beautiful finish which, as some believe, are found in equal perfection only in his *Tasso*. As this was not the first time he had written beautiful iambics, we may well suppose that his ear counted for more in the metric composition than any theory.

[1] K. P. Moritz (1757–1793). His work and the theory are discussed in the *Italienische Reise*.

We do not know how much, if anything, was altered in the work by Herder. In one of his letters the poet expresses the hope that Herder would help the euphony of the verse by any change or addition that he might consider proper, and continues: "I have left a few half lines where they may possibly be of good effect, and I have also changed the measure purposely in a few cases." Whether Herder complied with this request, or to what extent he did so, is not known. The few half lines found in the drama, and also the irregular measures, are very effective where they stand.

In the form thus given it, Goethe's *Iphigenia* will continue to live in German literature as one of its noblest representatives. Unlike his previous works, however, it did not at first gain the approval of the entire nation. He noticed from the guarded answers of his friends in Weimar that the drama, now that it became known generally, for the previous versions had been kept from the public, failed to satisfy their expectations. It was not tumultuous and stirring like *Goetz*, nor saturated with passion like *Werther*, but its calm, majestic beauty finally won recognition, not only in Germany, but in the entire civilized world. Madame de Staël, in her *De l'Allemagne* was the first to call the attention of Europe to its merits. Since then it has been translated into all the civilized languages, even into Ancient Greek.

VII. THE DRAMATIC CHARACTER OF GOETHE'S IPHIGENIA.

As a piece for the theatre the *Iphigenia* has always been highly admired when the different parts were taken by superior artists. But such artists are rare, and when acted by

average actors the beauty of its poetry is lost. A modern author and critic, Paul Heyse, praises its dramatic features which, he says, should make it a model drama. He thinks, however, that Goethe succeeded in making it so rather by the intuition of genius than by an exact understanding of what a drama required in order to be a success upon the stage.[1]

There was a strange misunderstanding even in the mind of so great a man as Schiller concerning what constitutes the peculiar dramatic quality of this drama. He attempted to adapt it in 1802, with a view to place all that was action as he conceived of it, on the stage, and to leave the moral element to inference. Karl Goedeke has correctly said that[2] this is equivalent to a complete inversion (*Umkehrung*) of the plan of the poem. Schiller wished, for instance, to put the Furies bodily on the stage, from which they had already been banished by Euripides. He was forced finally to admit that "the drama was astonishingly non-Greek and modern."

Modern indeed it is, but modern, as has already been stated, in the sense of being a continuation of the Greek tradition in the matter of dramatic art. The work shows the noble features of Greek art in its perfection, in so far as the poetic word can reproduce the beauty of the sculptured marble. There is a grand simplicity in the action and in the language, a chaste repression of mere rhetorical by-work, and a harmonious rounding off of the dramatic plot

[1] Paul Heyse. Goethe's *Verhältniss zur Bühne*. (*Deutsche Rundschau*. 20. Jahrgang 10. Heft. pp. 14–32.)

[2] In his *Einleitung* to the 11th volume of Goethe's *Sämmtliche Werke*, Page 4. Cotta edition.

and its solution, which recall the best features of the greatest dramatists of ancient Greece.

Goethe has himself spoken of three classes of theatre-goers: the multitude who only want to *see*, another and smaller class who want to *feel*, and a still smaller class who want to *think* on what occurs in the scene, at the same time that they enjoy it. It is for this latter class that dramas like *Iphigenia* and *Tasso* were written.

It will be seen that Goethe conformed in this work to the accepted theory of the drama, in so far as all that is essential to the evolution of the play is going on before us, and that it moves on, without retarding episodes, to its conclusion or *dénouement*. But this is the very essence of dramatic art. He omitted the Greek chorus which, in reality, represented a retarding element in the Greek drama and served principally as a medium for the lyrical effusions of the poet himself.

Instead of the chorus, we find in Goethe's drama several lyrical passages which similarly retard the action, but help to deepen our impression of the character of the heroine, and also to place in strongest relief the mythological elements, thus heightening the interest in the action.

Paul Heyse, in the oration referred to, points out that Iphigenia's prayer, after her recognition of her brother, is not in keeping with the scene. (ll. 1094–1117.) He thinks a sister, in such a case, would betray her feeling more naturally. The criticism is in itself correct, but we should bear in mind that the prayer is offered after Orestes has gone away, which we must suppose to have been by a rapid movement, and that Iphigenia may have a reason not to follow him, for she might have thus betrayed their relation

to an enemy. Under the circumstances, therefore, nothing could be more in keeping for a priestess of Diana, and for a woman of Iphigenia's character, than to turn in prayer to the deity who, as she believes, has at last heard and granted her anxious prayer. This prayer, or address to the gods, may be fitly compared to the chorus in a classical Greek drama. In like manner we may compare the prayer which Iphigenia utters at the end of the first act, the first part of her soliloquy in the beginning of the fourth, and the "Song of the Parcæ" at the end of the same act. Goethe was careful not to introduce the chorus as such, because it has no proper place on a modern stage. Schiller introduced it in his *Bride of Messina*, and his is by far the most successful modern venture; but he never repeated the experiment, and no other great poet has followed him. A modern audience cares as little for the chorus as it does for the padded, masked, and artificially heightened figure of the ancient actor. We want to see the play of the features and the natural movements of the actor. The artificial character of ancient acting would strike us as absurd.

VIII. THE METER.

The poem is written mainly in blank verse of ten or eleven syllables, with a cæsura after the fourth, which should be an accented syllable. In theory each line should consist of five iambics (◡ ⏑́), but occasionally an eleventh unaccented syllable is added.

In practice we find that a uniform rule is not always observed. Poets substitute a trochee (⏑́ ◡) or a dactyl (⏑́ ◡ ◡) for an iambic, and make other changes.

What Poe showed to be true of English poetry is true also of German.

Goethe was perplexed by the difficulty and refers to it in his *Italienische Reise*. (See Introd. page lii.)

To illustrate we may compare the first two lines of the poem with the second two. We have pure iambics in:

Heraús in éure Schátten, rége Wípfel,

Des álten, heíl'gen, díchtbelaúbten Haíns,

but in the third line:

Wie in der Göttin stilles Heiligtum,

we find that the first two words do not constitute an iambic; (*Wie in*) neither having a decided accent, but the first word rather than the second (⏊ ⏑).

In the fourth line:

Tret' ich noch jetzt mit schauderndem Gefühl,

the first two words form even more evidently a trochee, (*Trét' ich*); while in "*scháuderndem*" we have a dactyl, unless we admit a secondary accent on the otherwise unaccented syllable *dem*.

As modern prosody, unlike the ancient, is not based on the quantity of vowels, but on the stress (accent) with which they are pronounced, it is important to recognize the different kinds of accent. We distinguish (1) the *regular syllabic* or *word accent*, náture, *Natúr;* fáther, *Váter;* (2) the *secondary accent* (in German, *Nebenton*, the *primary accent* being *Hochton*) of words of several syllables: Nátionàlity, *ìtaliénisch, schwésterlìche,* Königìnnen; (3) the *sentence accent*, also called the *emphatic*, as the first *is* in Pope's line: "Whatever *is* is right." Occasionally sev-

eral monosyllabic words are pronounced with an even stress (*schwebende Betonung*). An example is found in the line:

Wìe sìch dìe Blúme nàch dèr Sónne wéndet;

also:

Unstérbliche, dìe ìhr dèn réinen Tág

The last line shows also a very great deviation in the two unquestionably unaccented syllables *liche* of *Unstérbliche*, and yet its effect on the ear is melodious.

We are reminded of Goethe's remark that he made his verses "resound to him line by line" in Rome. (Introd. p. xlix.)

If the subject of accent is well understood, the irregular meters of the poem will offer no difficulty. What is to be specially noted is that all these verse lines *satisfy a delicate ear*, while yet they are imperfect on the abstract theory of Greek and Latin imitation. It is therefore with good reason that H. Grimm says in his *Vorlesungen* (p. 401–402), "Goethe's so-called incorrect verses are indispensable extensions of the liberty permitted to us."

The remark is as true of Shakespeare as it is of Goethe.

The same principle holds of course in reference to the irregular meters of the poem which contain a greater or less number of feet, and to the lyrical passages. Where these irregular meters occur they are easily recognized. There are ten lines in the poem with six accents in each. Lines with less than the regular five accents are even less numerous, but are very effective, as for instance, l. 1053, *Der Mutter Geist*, which is awe-inspiring by its very brevity. So also l. 1081, *Sei Wahrheit!* (following *zwischen uns*)

gives peculiar force, by its single noun, to the speaker's earnest purpose; while nothing can surpass the simple, *Lebt wohl!* of the last line.

If we cling to the ancient terminology we may readily scan the lyrical passages by applying the principle already stated. It is not necessary to write out the scheme as the division is easily made, if respect be had to the accent, and can be of no use when the matter of accent is not properly understood.

For all purposes of closer study of the subject of modern German prosody we refer to the excellent work of J. Minor: *Neuhochdeutsche Metrik*.

IX. THE MANUSCRIPTS.

Few works of Goethe can be traced so continuously from the first conception to the final perfect form as the *Iphigenie*. It presents a most instructive study of the growth of the work in the poet's mind, and how only by degrees and frequent experiment the beautiful work attained a complete form.

The manuscript upon which the Weimar edition of the *Iphigenie* is based, is in the poet's own hand and is preserved in the Goethe and Schiller Archives in Weimar. It forms a quarto and consists of fifty-eight sheets numbered in pencil, but somewhat irregularly, by Goethe himself, and is enclosed in a wrapper. The cover has on the exterior the title: "Iphigenie auf Tauris, ein Schauspiel;" and within a list of the characters. In preparing the Weimar edition, the editor, Berthold Litzmann, made use of the principal editions published with the poet's sanction by

Göschen of Leipzig in 1787, and to some extent of the editions by Cotta of Stuttgart and Tübingen, from 1807 to 1828. This volume corresponds to the ninth volume of the edition *letzter Hand.*

The manuscripts of the original prose version are more numerous, but none of them were written by the poet himself. In his edition of the original prose form, and of Lavater's copy of the first metrical version, Victor Michels, the Weimar editor, distinguishes three principal phases based on different manuscripts.

The manuscript for the first phase (H^1, also marked I^1) is a quarto of eighty-eight pages, numbered in pencil, enclosed in a wrapper on which the title is written, in the Royal Library of Berlin. This is the manuscript which J. Baechtold published as A in his *Iphigenie in vierfacher Gestalt* (Freiburg i. B. and Tübingen, 1883). It has also been published by Schröer in Kürschner's *Deutsche National-litteratur*, Bd. 90, and is contained in the Weimar edition of Goethe's *Werke, Jugendschriften*, Bd. 39. It is bound, and on its blue wrapper on the first page is written: "1tes Manuscript der Iphygenie, von Goethe eigenhändig (nachrichtlich, C. W. von Knebel)"; below, on the right: "Dieses eigenhändige Mnsr. schenkte Göthe meinem Vater zum Zweck der Aufführung desselben auf dem damaligen Liebhaber Theater zu Ettersburg bei Weimar. Mein Vater übernahm die Rolle des Toas und Corona Schröter die der Iphigenie. C. W. von Knebel"; and, below on the left: ("Mittheilung meiner Mutter v. K.")

The manuscript is a copy by two different copyists, one having written the first twenty-nine pages, the other the rest. Schröer (*l. c.*) has given facsimiles of both.[1] This manu-

[1] Goethe's *Werke*, Bd. 5, p. xxxii.

script is probably referred to in Goethe's letter to Knebel of March 15, 1779. "Hier sind die drei Akte der Iphigenie: lies sie Herdern und Seckendorfen. Letzterem gieb sie mit unter der Bedingung der Stille."

Victor Michels treats a copy by Lavater as also belonging to this group, which is divided into irregular verse lines. It is preserved in the Ducal Library of Dessau, and consists of five small pasteboard volumes in small folio, each containing one act. The fourth act in this manuscript, as well as in the preceding, is not divided into scenes. It was published by Bächtold as B.

The second phase is represented by the destroyed Strassburg manuscript which von Loeper had copied with "diplomatic exactness." It was also a copy, but one corrected and revised by Goethe. Both this and the Berlin manuscript point to the same original. Under the head of the third phase six manuscripts are preserved. These are of interest, but of less value for determining the text.

Iphigenie auf Tauris.

Ein Schauspiel.

Personen.

Iphigenie.
Thoas, König der Taurier.
Orest.
Pylades.
Arkas.

Schauplatz: Hain vor Dianens Tempel.

Erster Aufzug.

Erster Auftritt.

Iphigenie

Heraus in eure Schatten, rege Wipfel
Des alten, heil'gen, dichtbelaubten Haines,
Wie in der Göttin stilles Heiligtum,
Tret' ich noch jetzt mit schauderndem Gefühl,
5 Als wenn ich sie zum erstenmal beträte,
Und es gewöhnt sich nicht mein Geist hierher.
So manches Jahr bewahrt mich hier verborgen
Ein hoher Wille, dem ich mich ergebe;
Doch immer bin ich, wie im ersten, fremd.
10 Denn ach! mich trennt das Meer von den Geliebten,
Und an dem Ufer steh' ich lange Tage,
Das Land der Griechen mit der Seele suchend;
Und gegen meine Seufzer bringt die Welle
Nur dumpfe Töne brausend mir herüber.
15 Weh dem, der fern von Eltern und Geschwistern
Ein einsam Leben führt! Ihm zehrt der Gram
Das nächste Glück vor seinen Lippen weg;
Ihm schwärmen abwärts immer die Gedanken
Nach seines Vaters Hallen, wo die Sonne
20 Zuerst den Himmel vor ihm aufschloß, wo
Sich Mitgeborne spielend fest und fester
Mit sanften Banden aneinander knüpften.
Ich rechte mit den Göttern nicht; allein
Der Frauen Zustand ist beklagenswert.

25 Zu Hauſ' und in dem Kriege herrſcht der Mann,
Und in der Fremde weiß er ſich zu helfen.
Ihn freuet der Beſitz; ihn krönt der Sieg;
Ein ehrenvoller Tod iſt ihm bereitet.
Wie enggebunden iſt des Weibes Glück!
30 Schon einem rauhen Gatten zu gehorchen
Iſt Pflicht und Troſt; wie elend, wenn ſie gar
Ein feindlich Schickſal in die Ferne treibt!
So hält mich Thoas hier, ein edler Mann,
In ernſten, heil'gen Sklavenbanden feſt.
35 O wie beſchämt geſteh' ich, daß ich dir
Mit ſtillem Widerwillen diene, Göttin,
Dir, meiner Retterin! Mein Leben ſollte
Zu freiem Dienſte dir gewidmet ſein.
Auch hab' ich ſtets auf dich gehofft und hoffe
40 Noch jetzt auf dich, Diana, die du mich,
Des größten Königes verſtoßne Tochter,
In deinen heil'gen, ſanften Arm genommen.
Ja, Tochter Zeus', wenn du den hohen Mann,
Den du, die Tochter fordernd, ängſtigteſt,
45 Wenn du den göttergleichen Agamemnon,
Der dir ſein Liebſtes zum Altare brachte,
Von Trojas umgewandten Mauern rühmlich
Nach ſeinem Vaterland zurück begleitet,
Die Gattin ihm, Elektren und den Sohn,
50 Die ſchönen Schätze, wohl erhalten haſt:
So gieb auch mich den Meinen endlich wieder,
Und rette mich, die du vom Tod errettet,
Auch von dem Leben hier, dem zweiten Tode.

Zweiter Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Arkas.

Arkas

Der König sendet mich hierher und beut
55 Der Priesterin Dianens Gruß und Heil.
Dies ist der Tag, da Tauris seiner Göttin
Für wunderbare neue Siege dankt.
Ich eile vor dem König und dem Heer,
Zu melden, daß er kommt und daß es naht.

Iphigenie

60 Wir sind bereit, sie würdig zu empfangen,
Und unsre Göttin sieht willkommnem Opfer
Von Thoas' Hand mit Gnadenblick entgegen.

Arkas

O, fänd' ich auch den Blick der Priesterin,
Der werten, vielgeehrten, deinen Blick,
65 O heil'ge Jungfrau, heller, leuchtender,
Uns allen gutes Zeichen! Noch bedeckt
Der Gram geheimnisvoll dein Innerstes;
Vergebens harren wir schon Jahre lang
Auf ein vertraulich Wort aus deiner Brust.
70 So lang' ich dich an dieser Stätte kenne,
Ist dies der Blick, vor dem ich immer schaudre;
Und wie mit Eisenbanden bleibt die Seele
Ins Innerste des Busens dir geschmiedet.

Iphigenie

Wie's der Vertriebnen, der Verwaisten ziemt.

Arkas

75 Scheinst du dir hier vertrieben und verwaist?

Iphigenie

Kann uns zum Vaterland die Fremde werden?

Arkas

Und dir ist fremd das Vaterland geworden.

Iphigenie

Das ist's, warum mein blutend Herz nicht heilt.
In erster Jugend, da sich kaum die Seele
80 An Vater, Mutter und Geschwister band,
Die neuen Schößlinge, gesellt und lieblich,
Vom Fuß der alten Stämme himmelwärts
Zu dringen strebten, leider faßte da
Ein fremder Fluch mich an und trennte mich
85 Von den Geliebten, riß das schöne Band
Mit ehrner Faust entzwei. Sie war dahin,
Der Jugend beste Freude, das Gedeihn
Der ersten Jahre. Selbst gerettet, war
Ich nur ein Schatten mir, und frische Lust
90 Des Lebens blüht in mir nicht wieder auf.

Arkas

Wenn du dich so unglücklich nennen willst,
So darf ich dich auch wohl undankbar nennen.

Iphigenie

Dank habt ihr stets.

Arkas

Doch nicht den reinen Dank,
Um dessentwillen man die Wohlthat thut,

95 Den frohen Blick, der ein zufriednes Leben
Und ein geneigtes Herz dem Wirte zeigt.
Als dich ein tief geheimnisvolles Schicksal
Vor so viel Jahren diesem Tempel brachte,
Kam Thoas dir, als einer Gottgegebnen,
100 Mit Ehrfurcht und mit Neigung zu begegnen;
Und dieses Ufer ward dir hold und freundlich,
Das jedem Fremden sonst voll Grausens war,
Weil niemand unser Reich vor dir betrat,
Der an Dianens heil'gen Stufen nicht,
105 Nach altem Brauch, ein blutig Opfer, fiel.

Iphigenie

Frei atmen macht das Leben nicht allein.
Welch Leben ist's, das an der heil'gen Stätte,
Gleich einem Schatten um sein eigen Grab,
Ich nur vertrauern muß? Und nenn' ich das
110 Ein fröhlich selbstbewußtes Leben, wenn
Uns jeder Tag, vergebens hingeträumt,
Zu jenen grauen Tagen vorbereitet,
Die an dem Ufer Lethes, selbstvergessend,
Die Trauerschar der Abgeschiednen feiert?
115 Ein unnütz Leben ist ein früher Tod;
Dies Frauenschicksal ist vor allen meins.

Arkas

Den edlen Stolz, daß du dir selbst nicht g'nügest,
Verzeih' ich dir, so sehr ich dich bedaure;
Er raubet den Genuß des Lebens dir.
120 Du hast hier nichts gethan seit deiner Ankunft?
Wer hat des Königs trüben Sinn erheitert?
Wer hat den alten grausamen Gebrauch,

Daß am Altar Dianens jeder Fremde
Sein Leben blutend läßt, von Jahr zu Jahr
125 Mit sanfter Überredung aufgehalten,
Und die Gefangnen vom gewissen Tod
Ins Vaterland so oft zurückgeschickt?
Hat nicht Diane, statt erzürnt zu sein,
Daß sie der blut'gen alten Opfer mangelt,
130 Dein sanft Gebet in reichem Maß erhört?
Umschwebt mit frohem Fluge nicht der Sieg
Das Heer? und eilt er nicht sogar voraus?
Und fühlt nicht jeglicher ein besser Los,
Seitdem der König, der uns weis' und tapfer
135 So lang geführet, nun sich auch der Milde
In deiner Gegenwart erfreut und uns
Des schweigenden Gehorsams Pflicht erleichtert?
Das nennst du unnütz, wenn von deinem Wesen
Auf Tausende herab ein Balsam träufelt?
140 Wenn du dem Volke, dem ein Gott dich brachte,
Des neuen Glückes ew'ge Quelle wirst
Und an dem unwirtbaren Todesufer
Dem Fremden Heil und Rückkehr zubereitest?

Iphigenie

Das wenige verschwindet leicht dem Blick,
145 Der vorwärts sieht, wieviel noch übrig bleibt.

Arkas

Doch lobst du den, der, was er thut, nicht schätzt?

Iphigenie

Man tadelt den, der seine Thaten wägt.

Arkas

Auch den, der wahren Wert zu stolz nicht achtet,
Wie den, der falschen Wert zu eitel hebt.
150 Glaub' mir und hör' auf eines Mannes Wort,
Der treu und redlich dir ergeben ist:
Wenn heut der König mit dir redet, so
Erleichtr' ihm, was er dir zu sagen denkt.

Iphigenie

Du ängstest mich mit jedem guten Worte;
155 Oft wich ich seinem Antrag mühsam aus.

Arkas

Bedenke was du thust und was dir nützt.
Seitdem der König seinen Sohn verloren,
Vertraut er wenigen der Seinen mehr,
Und diesen wenigen nicht mehr wie sonst.
160 Mißgünstig sieht er jedes Edlen Sohn
Als seines Reiches Folger an; er fürchtet
Ein einsam hilflos Alter, ja vielleicht
Verwegnen Aufstand und frühzeit'gen Tod.
Der Scythe setzt ins Reden keinen Vorzug,
165 Am wenigsten der König. Er, der nur
Gewohnt ist zu befehlen und zu thun,
Kennt nicht die Kunst, von weitem ein Gespräch
Nach seiner Absicht langsam fein zu lenken.
Erschwer's ihm nicht durch ein rückhaltend Weigern,
170 Durch ein vorsätzlich Mißverstehen. Geh
Gefällig ihm den halben Weg entgegen.

Iphigenie

Soll ich beschleunigen, was mich bedroht?

Arkas

Willst du sein Werben eine Drohung nennen?

Iphigenie

Es ist die schrecklichste von allen mir.

Arkas

175 Gieb ihm für seine Neigung nur Vertraun.

Iphigenie

Wenn er von Furcht erst meine Seele löst.

Arkas

Warum verschweigst du deine Herkunft ihm?

Iphigenie

Weil einer Priesterin Geheimnis ziemt.

Arkas

Dem König sollte nichts Geheimnis sein;
180 Und ob er's gleich nicht fordert, fühlt er's doch
Und fühlt es tief in seiner großen Seele,
Daß du sorgfältig dich vor ihm verwahrst.

Iphigenie

Nährt er Verdruß und Unmut gegen mich?

Arkas

So scheint es fast. Zwar schweigt er auch von dir;
185 Doch haben hingeworfne Worte mich
Belehrt, daß seine Seele fest den Wunsch
Ergriffen hat, dich zu besitzen. Laß,
O überlaß ihn nicht sich selbst! damit

In seinem Busen nicht der Unmut reife
190 Und dir Entsetzen bringe, du zu spät
An meinen treuen Rat mit Reue denkest.

Iphigenie

Wie? Sinnt der König, was kein edler Mann,
Der seinen Namen liebt und dem Verehrung
Der Himmlischen den Busen bändiget,
195 Je denken sollte? Sinnt er vom Altar
Mich in sein Bette mit Gewalt zu ziehn?
So ruf' ich alle Götter und vor allen
Dianen, die entschloßne Göttin, an,
Die ihren Schutz der Priesterin gewiß
200 Und, Jungfrau einer Jungfrau, gern gewährt.

Arkas

Sei ruhig! Ein gewaltsam neues Blut
Treibt nicht den König, solche Jünglingsthat
Verwegen auszuüben. Wie er sinnt,
Befürcht' ich andern harten Schluß von ihm,
205 Den unaufhaltbar er vollenden wird:
Denn seine Seel' ist fest und unbeweglich.
Drum bitt' ich dich, vertrau ihm, sei ihm dankbar,
Wenn du ihm weiter nichts gewähren kannst.

Iphigenie

O sage, was dir weiter noch bekannt ist.

Arkas

210 Erfahr's von ihm. Ich seh' den König kommen;
Du ehrst ihn, und dich heißt dein eigen Herz,
Ihm freundlich und vertraulich zu begegnen.

Ein edler Mann wird durch ein gutes Wort
Der Frauen weit geführt.

Iphigenie allein

Zwar seh' ich nicht,
215 Wie ich dem Rat des Treuen folgen soll;
Doch folg' ich gern der Pflicht, dem Könige
Für seine Wohlthat gutes Wort zu geben,
Und wünsche mir, daß ich dem Mächtigen,
Was ihm gefällt, mit Wahrheit sagen möge.

Dritter Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Thoas.

Iphigenie

220 Mit königlichen Gütern segne dich
Die Göttin! Sie gewähre Sieg und Ruhm
Und Reichtum und das Wohl der Deinigen
Und jedes frommen Wunsches Fülle dir!
Daß, der du über viele sorgend herrschest,
225 Du auch vor vielen seltnes Glück genießest.

Thoas

Zufrieden wär' ich, wenn mein Volk mich rühmte.
Was ich erwarb, genießen andre mehr
Als ich. Der ist am glücklichsten, er sei
Ein König oder ein Geringer, dem
230 In seinem Hause Wohl bereitet ist.
Du nahmest teil an meinen tiefen Schmerzen,
Als mir das Schwert der Feinde meinen Sohn,
Den letzten, besten, von der Seite riß.

So lang die Rache meinen Geist besaß,
235 Empfand ich nicht die Öde meiner Wohnung;
Doch jetzt, da ich befriedigt wiederkehre,
Ihr Reich zerstört, mein Sohn gerochen ist,
Bleibt mir zu Hause nichts, das mich ergötze.
Der fröhliche Gehorsam, den ich sonst
240 Aus einem jeden Auge blicken sah,
Ist nun von Sorg' und Unmut still gedämpft.
Ein jeder sinnt, was künftig werden wird,
Und folgt dem Kinderlosen, weil er muß.
Nun komm' ich heut in diesen Tempel, den
245 Ich oft betrat, um Sieg zu bitten und
Für Sieg zu danken. Einen alten Wunsch
Trag' ich im Busen, der auch dir nicht fremd
Noch unerwartet ist: ich hoffe, dich,
Zum Segen meines Volks und mir zum Segen,
250 Als Braut in meine Wohnung einzuführen.

Iphigenie

Der Unbekannten bietest du zu viel,
O König, an. Es steht die Flüchtige
Beschämt vor dir, die nichts an diesem Ufer
Als Schutz und Ruhe sucht, die du ihr gabst.

Thoas

255 Daß du in das Geheimnis deiner Abkunft
Vor mir wie vor dem letzten stets dich hüllest,
Wär' unter keinem Volke recht und gut.
Dies Ufer schreckt die Fremden; das Gesetz
Gebietet's und die Not. Allein von dir,
260 Die jedes frommen Rechts genießt, ein wohl
Von uns empfangner Gast, nach eignem Sinn

Und Willen ihres Tages sich erfreut,
Von dir hofft' ich Vertrauen, das der Wirt
Für seine Treue wohl erwarten darf.

Iphigenie

265 Verbarg ich meiner Eltern Namen und
Mein Haus, o König, war's Verlegenheit,
Nicht Mißtraun. Denn vielleicht, ach wüßtest du
Wer vor dir steht, und welch verwünschtes Haupt
Du nährst und schützest, ein Entsetzen faßte
270 Dein großes Herz mit seltnem Schauer an,
Und statt die Seite deines Thrones mir
Zu bieten, triebest du mich vor der Zeit
Aus deinem Reiche; stießest mich vielleicht,
Eh zu den Meinen frohe Rückkehr mir
275 Und meiner Wandrung Ende zugedacht ist,
Dem Elend zu, das jeden Schweifenden,
Von seinem Haus Vertriebnen überall
Mit kalter, fremder Schreckenshand erwartet.

Thoas

Was auch der Rat der Götter mit dir sei,
280 Und was sie deinem Haus und dir gedenken,
So fehlt es doch, seitdem du bei uns wohnst
Und eines frommen Gastes Recht genießest,
An Segen nicht, der mir von oben kommt.
Ich möchte schwer zu überreden sein,
285 Daß ich an dir ein schuldvoll Haupt beschütze.

Iphigenie

Dir bringt die Wohlthat Segen, nicht der Gast.

Thoas

Was man Verruchten thut, wird nicht gesegnet.
Drum endige dein Schweigen und dein Weigern;
Es fordert dies kein ungerechter Mann.
290 Die Göttin übergab dich meinen Händen;
Wie du ihr heilig warst, so warst du's mir.
Auch sei ihr Wink noch künftig mein Gesetz;
Wenn du nach Hause Rückkehr hoffen kannst,
So sprech' ich dich von aller Fordrung los.
295 Doch ist der Weg auf ewig dir versperrt,
Und ist dein Stamm vertrieben oder durch
Ein ungeheures Unheil ausgelöscht,
So bist du mein durch mehr als ein Gesetz.
Sprich offen! und du weißt, ich halte Wort.

Iphigenie

300 Vom alten Bande löset ungern sich
Die Zunge los, ein langverschwiegenes
Geheimnis endlich zu entdecken. Denn
Einmal vertraut, verläßt es ohne Rückkehr
Des tiefen Herzens sichre Wohnung, schadet,
305 Wie es die Götter wollen, oder nützt.
Vernimm! Ich bin aus Tantalus' Geschlecht.

Thoas

Du sprichst ein großes Wort gelassen aus.
Nennst du den deinen Ahnherrn, den die Welt
Als einen ehmals Hochbegnadigten
310 Der Götter kennt? Ist's jener Tantalus,
Den Jupiter zu Rat und Tafel zog,
An dessen alterfahrnen, vielen Sinn

Verknüpfenden Gesprächen Götter selbst
Wie an Orakelsprüchen sich ergötzten?

Iphigenie

315 Er ist es; aber Götter sollten nicht
Mit Menschen wie mit ihresgleichen wandeln;
Das sterbliche Geschlecht ist viel zu schwach,
In ungewohnter Höhe nicht zu schwindeln.
Unedel war er nicht und kein Verräter;
320 Allein zum Knecht zu groß, und zum Gesellen
Des großen Donnrers nur ein Mensch. So war
Auch sein Vergehen menschlich; ihr Gericht
War streng, und Dichter singen: Übermut
Und Untreu' stürzten ihn von Jovis Tisch
325 Zur Schmach des alten Tartarus hinab.
Ach und sein ganz Geschlecht trug ihren Haß!

Thoas

Trug es die Schuld des Ahnherrn oder eigne?

Iphigenie

Zwar die gewalt'ge Brust und der Titanen
Kraftvolles Mark war seiner Söhn' und Enkel
330 Gewisses Erbteil; doch es schmiedete
Der Gott um ihre Stirn ein ehern Band.
Rat, Mäßigung und Weisheit und Geduld
Verbarg er ihrem scheuen, düstern Blick;
Zur Wut ward ihnen jegliche Begier,
335 Und grenzenlos drang ihre Wut umher.
Schon Pelops, der Gewaltig-wollende,
Des Tantalus geliebter Sohn, erwarb
Sich durch Verrat und Mord das schönste Weib,

Oenomaus' Erzeugte, Hippodamien.
340 Sie bringt den Wünschen des Gemahls zwei Söhne,
Thyest und Atreus. Neidisch sehen sie
Des Vaters Liebe zu dem ersten Sohn,
Aus einem andern Bette wachsend, an.
Der Haß verbindet sie, und heimlich wagt
345 Das Paar im Brudermord die erste That.
Der Vater wähnet Hippodamien
Die Mörderin, und grimmig fordert er
Von ihr den Sohn zurück, und sie entleibt
Sich selbst —

Thoas

Du schweigest? Fahre fort zu reden!
350 Laß dein Vertraun dich nicht gereuen! Sprich!

Iphigenie

Wohl dem, der seiner Väter gern gedenkt,
Der froh von ihren Thaten, ihrer Größe
Den Hörer unterhält und, still sich freuend,
Ans Ende dieser schönen Reihe sich
355 Geschlossen sieht! Denn es erzeugt nicht gleich
Ein Haus den Halbgott, noch das Ungeheuer;
Erst eine Reihe Böser oder Guter
Bringt endlich das Entsetzen, bringt die Freude
Der Welt hervor. — Nach ihres Vaters Tode
360 Gebieten Atreus und Thyest der Stadt,
Gemeinsam herrschend. Lange konnte nicht
Die Eintracht dauern. Bald entehrt Thyest
Des Bruders Bette. Rächend treibet Atreus
Ihn aus dem Reiche. Tückisch hatte schon
365 Thyest, auf schwere Thaten sinnend, lange
Dem Bruder einen Sohn entwandt und heimlich

Ihn als den seinen schmeichelnd auferzogen.
Dem füllet er die Brust mit Wut und Rache
Und sendet ihn zur Königsstadt, daß er
370 Im Oheim seinen eignen Vater morde.
Des Jünglings Vorsatz wird entdeckt; der König
Straft grausam den gesandten Mörder, wähnend,
Er töte seines Bruders Sohn. Zu spät
Erfährt er, wer vor seinen trunknen Augen
375 Gemartert stirbt; und die Begier der Rache
Aus seiner Brust zu tilgen, sinnt er still
Auf unerhörte That. Er scheint gelassen,
Gleichgültig und versöhnt, und lockt den Bruder
Mit seinen beiden Söhnen in das Reich
380 Zurück, ergreift die Knaben, schlachtet sie,
Und setzt die ekle, schaudervolle Speise
Dem Vater bei dem ersten Mahle vor.
Und da Thyest an seinem Fleische sich
Gesättigt, eine Wehmut ihn ergreift,
385 Er nach den Kindern fragt, den Tritt, die Stimme
Der Knaben an des Saales Thüre schon
Zu hören glaubt, wirft Atreus grinsend
Ihm Haupt und Füße der Erschlagnen hin. —
Du wendest schaudernd dein Gesicht, o König!
390 So wendete die Sonn' ihr Antlitz weg
Und ihren Wagen aus dem ew'gen Gleise.
Dies sind die Ahnherrn deiner Priesterin;
Und viel unseliges Geschick der Männer,
Viel Thaten des verworrnen Sinnes deckt
395 Die Nacht mit schweren Fittichen und läßt
Uns nur in grauenvolle Dämmrung sehn.

Thoas

Verbirg sie schweigend auch. Es sei genug
Der Greuel! Sage nun, durch welch ein Wunder
Von diesem wilden Stamme du entsprangst.

Iphigenie

400 Des Atreus ältster Sohn war Agamemnon:
Er ist mein Vater. Doch, ich darf es sagen,
In ihm hab' ich seit meiner ersten Zeit
Ein Muster des vollkommnen Manns gesehn.
Ihm brachte Klytämnestra mich, den Erstling
405 Der Liebe, dann Elektren. Ruhig herrschte
Der König, und es war dem Hause Tantals
Die lang entbehrte Rast gewährt. Allein
Es mangelte dem Glück der Eltern noch
Ein Sohn, und kaum war dieser Wunsch erfüllt,
410 Daß zwischen beiden Schwestern nun Orest,
Der Liebling, wuchs, als neues Übel schon
Dem sichern Hause zubereitet war.
Der Ruf des Krieges ist zu euch gekommen,
Der, um den Raub der schönsten Frau zu rächen,
415 Die ganze Macht der Fürsten Griechenlands
Um Trojens Mauern lagerte. Ob sie
Die Stadt gewonnen, ihrer Rache Ziel
Erreicht, vernahm ich nicht. Mein Vater führte
Der Griechen Heer. In Aulis harrten sie
420 Auf günst'gen Wind vergebens; denn Diane,
Erzürnt auf ihren großen Führer, hielt
Die Eilenden zurück und forderte
Durch Kalchas' Mund des Königs ält'ste Tochter.
Sie lockten mit der Mutter mich ins Lager;

425 Sie rissen mich vor den Altar und weihten
Der Göttin dieses Haupt. — Sie war versöhnt;
Sie wollte nicht mein Blut und hüllte rettend
In eine Wolke mich; in diesem Tempel
Erkannt' ich mich zuerst vom Tode wieder.
430 Ich bin es selbst, bin Iphigenie,
Des Atreus Enkel, Agamemnons Tochter,
Der Göttin Eigentum, die mit dir spricht.

Thoas

Mehr Vorzug und Vertrauen geb' ich nicht
Der Königstochter als der Unbekannten.
435 Ich wiederhole meinen ersten Antrag:
Komm, folge mir und teile was ich habe.

Iphigenie

Wie darf ich solchen Schritt, o König, wagen?
Hat nicht die Göttin, die mich rettete,
Allein das Recht auf mein geweihtes Leben?
440 Sie hat für mich den Schutzort ausgesucht,
Und sie bewahrt mich einem Vater, den
Sie durch den Schein genug gestraft, vielleicht
Zur schönsten Freude seines Alters hier.
Vielleicht ist mir die frohe Rückkehr nah;
445 Und ich, auf ihren Weg nicht achtend, hätte
Mich wider ihren Willen hier gefesselt?
Ein Zeichen bat ich, wenn ich bleiben sollte.

Thoas

Das Zeichen ist, daß du noch hier verweilst.
Such' Ausflucht solcher Art nicht ängstlich auf.

450 Man spricht vergebens viel, um zu versagen;
Der andre hört von allem nur das Nein.

Iphigenie

Nicht Worte sind es, die nur blenden sollen;
Ich habe dir mein tiefstes Herz entdeckt.
Und sagst du dir nicht selbst, wie ich dem Vater,
455 Der Mutter, den Geschwistern mich entgegen
Mit ängstlichen Gefühlen sehnen muß?
Daß in den alten Hallen, wo die Trauer
Noch manchmal stille meinen Namen lispelt,
Die Freude, wie um eine Neugeborne,
460 Den schönsten Kranz von Säul' an Säulen schlinge.
O, sendetest du mich auf Schiffen hin!
Du gäbest mir und allen neues Leben.

Thoas

So kehr' zurück! Thu', was dein Herz dich heißt,
Und höre nicht die Stimme guten Rats
465 Und der Vernunft. Sei ganz ein Weib und gieb
Dich hin dem Triebe, der dich zügellos
Ergreift und dahin oder dorthin reißt.
Wenn ihnen eine Lust im Busen brennt,
Hält vom Verräter sie kein heilig Band,
470 Der sie dem Vater oder dem Gemahl
Aus langbewährten, treuen Armen lockt;
Und schweigt in ihrer Brust die rasche Glut,
So dringt auf sie vergebens treu und mächtig
Der Überredung goldne Zunge los.

Iphigenie

475 Gedenk', o König, deines edeln Wortes!

Willst du mein Zutraun so erwiedern? Du
Schienst vorbereitet, alles zu vernehmen.

Thoas

Aufs Ungehoffte war ich nicht bereitet;
Doch sollt' ich's auch erwarten: wußt' ich nicht,
480 Daß ich mit einem Weibe handeln ging?

Iphigenie

Schilt nicht, o König, unser arm Geschlecht.
Nicht herrlich wie die euern, aber nicht
Unedel sind die Waffen eines Weibes.
Glaub' es, darin bin ich dir vorzuziehn,
485 Daß ich dein Glück mehr als du selber kenne.
Du wähnest, unbekannt mit dir und mir,
Ein näher Band werd' uns zum Glück vereinen.
Voll guten Mutes, wie voll guten Willens,
Dringst du in mich, daß ich mich fügen soll;
490 Und hier dank' ich den Göttern, daß sie mir
Die Festigkeit gegeben, dieses Bündnis
Nicht einzugehen, das sie nicht gebilligt.

Thoas

Es spricht kein Gott; es spricht dein eignes Herz.

Iphigenie

Sie reden nur durch unser Herz zu uns.

Thoas

495 Und hab' ich, sie zu hören, nicht das Recht?

Iphigenie

Es überbraust der Sturm die zarte Stimme.

Thoas

Die Priesterin vernimmt sie wohl allein?

Iphigenie

Vor allen andern merke sie der Fürst.

Thoas

Dein heilig Amt und dein geerbtes Recht
500 An Jovis Tisch bringt dich den Göttern näher
Als einen erdgebornen Wilden.

Iphigenie

So
Büß' ich nun das Vertraun, das du erzwangst.

Thoas

Ich bin ein Mensch, und besser ist's, wir enden.
So bleibe denn mein Wort: Sei Priesterin
505 Der Göttin, wie sie dich erkoren hat;
Doch mir verzeih' Diane, daß ich ihr
Bisher mit Unrecht und mit innerm Vorwurf
Die alten Opfer vorenthalten habe.
Kein Fremder nahet glücklich unserm Ufer;
510 Von alters her ist ihm der Tod gewiß.
Nur du hast mich mit einer Freundlichkeit,
In der ich bald der zarten Tochter Liebe,
Bald stille Neigung einer Braut zu sehn
Mich tief erfreute, wie mit Zauberbanden
515 Gefesselt, daß ich meiner Pflicht vergaß.
Du hattest mir die Sinnen eingewiegt,
Das Murren meines Volks vernahm ich nicht;
Nun rufen sie die Schuld von meines Sohnes

Frühzeit'gem Tode lauter über mich.
520 Um deinetwillen halt' ich länger nicht
Die Menge, die das Opfer dringend fordert.

Iphigenie

Um meinetwillen hab' ich's nie begehrt.
Der mißversteht die Himmlischen, der sie
Blutgierig wähnt; er dichtet ihnen nur
525 Die eignen grausamen Begierden an.
Entzog die Göttin mich nicht selbst dem Priester?
Ihr war mein Dienst willkommner als mein Tod.

Thoas

Es ziemt sich nicht für uns, den heiligen
Gebrauch mit leicht beweglicher Vernunft
530 Nach unserm Sinn zu deuten und zu lenken.
Thu' deine Pflicht, ich werde meine thun.
Zwei Fremde, die wir in des Ufers Höhlen
Versteckt gefunden und die meinem Lande
Nichts Gutes bringen, sind in meiner Hand.
535 Mit diesen nehme deine Göttin wieder
Ihr erstes, rechtes, lang entbehrtes Opfer!
Ich sende sie hierher; du weißt den Dienst.

Vierter Auftritt.

Iphigenie allein.

Du hast Wolken, gnädige Retterin,
Einzuhüllen unschuldig Verfolgte,
540 Und auf Winden dem ehrnen Geschick sie
Aus den Armen über das Meer,

Über der Erde weiteste Strecken,
Und wohin es dir gut dünkt, zu tragen.
Weise bist du und siehest das Künftige;
545 Nicht vorüber ist dir das Vergangne,
Und dein Blick ruht über den Deinen,
Wie dein Licht, das Leben der Nächte,
Über der Erde ruhet und waltet.
O enthalte von Blut meine Hände!
550 Nimmer bringt es Segen und Ruhe;
Und die Gestalt des zufällig Ermordeten
Wird auf des traurig unwilligen Mörders
Böse Stunden lauern und schrecken.
Denn die Unsterblichen lieben der Menschen
555 Weit verbreitete gute Geschlechter,
Und sie fristen das flüchtige Leben
Gerne dem Sterblichen, wollen ihm gerne
Ihres eigenen, ewigen Himmels
Mitgenießendes fröhliches Anschaun
560 Eine Weile gönnen und lassen.

Zweiter Aufzug.

Erster Auftritt.

Orest. Pylades.

Orest

Es ist der Weg des Todes, den wir treten;
Mit jedem Schritt wird meine Seele stiller.
Als ich Apollen bat, das gräßliche
Geleit der Rachegeister von der Seite
565 Mir abzunehmen, schien er Hilf' und Rettung
Im Tempel seiner vielgeliebten Schwester,
Die über Tauris herrscht, mit hoffnungsreichen,
Gewissen Götterworten zu versprechen;
Und nun erfüllet sich's, daß alle Not
570 Mit meinem Leben völlig enden soll.
Wie leicht wird's mir, dem eine Götterhand
Das Herz zusammendrückt, den Sinn betäubt,
Dem schönen Licht der Sonne zu entsagen.
Und sollen Atreus' Enkel in der Schlacht
575 Ein siegbekröntes Ende nicht gewinnen,
Soll ich wie meine Ahnen, wie mein Vater
Als Opfertier im Jammertode bluten,
So sei es! Besser hier vor dem Altar,
Als im verworfnen Winkel, wo die Netze
580 Der nahverwandte Meuchelmörder stellt.
Laßt mir so lange Ruh, ihr Unterird'schen,
Die nach dem Blut ihr, das von meinen Tritten
Hernieder träufelnd meinen Pfad bezeichnet,

Wie losgelaßne Hunde spürend hetzt!
585 Laßt mich, ich komme bald zu euch hinab.
Das Licht des Tags soll euch nicht sehn, noch mich.
Der Erde schöner, grüner Teppich soll
Kein Tummelplatz für Larven sein. Dort unten
Such' ich euch auf; dort bindet alle dann
590 Ein gleich Geschick in ew'ge matte Nacht.
Nur dich, mein Pylades, dich, meiner Schuld
Und meines Banns unschuldigen Genossen,
Wie ungern nehm' ich dich in jenes Trauerland
Frühzeitig mit! Dein Leben oder Tod
595 Giebt mir allein noch Hoffnung oder Furcht.

Pylades

Ich bin noch nicht, Orest, wie du, bereit,
In jenes Schattenreich hinabzugehn.
Ich sinne noch, durch die verworrnen Pfade,
Die nach der schwarzen Nacht zu führen scheinen,
600 Uns zu dem Leben wieder aufzuwinden.
Ich denke nicht den Tod; ich sinn' und horche,
Ob nicht zu irgend einer frohen Flucht
Die Götter Rat und Wege zubereiten.
Der Tod, gefürchtet oder ungefürchtet,
605 Kommt unaufhaltsam. Wenn die Priesterin
Schon, unsre Locken weihend abzuschneiden,
Die Hand erhebt, soll dein' und meine Rettung
Mein einziger Gedanke sein. Erhebe
Von diesem Unmut deine Seele; zweifelnd,
610 Beschleunigest du die Gefahr. Apoll
Gab uns das Wort: im Heiligtum der Schwester
Sei Trost und Hilf' und Rückkehr dir bereitet.

Der Götter Worte sind nicht doppelsinnig,
Wie der Gedrückte sie im Unmut wähnt.

Orest

615 Des Lebens dunkle Decke breitete
Die Mutter schon mir um das zarte Haupt,
Und so wuchs ich herauf, ein Ebenbild
Des Vaters, und es war mein stummer Blick
Ein bittrer Vorwurf ihr und ihrem Buhlen.
620 Wie oft, wenn still Elektra, meine Schwester,
Am Feuer in der tiefen Halle saß,
Drängt' ich beklommen mich an ihren Schoß
Und starrte, wie sie bitter weinte, sie
Mit großen Augen an. Dann sagte sie
625 Von unserm hohen Vater viel; wie sehr
Verlangt' ich, ihn zu sehn, bei ihm zu sein!
Mich wünscht' ich bald nach Troja, ihn bald her.
Es kam der Tag —

Pylades

O, laß von jener Stunde
Sich Höllengeister nächtlich unterhalten!
630 Uns gebe die Erinnrung schöner Zeit
Zu frischem Heldenlaufe neue Kraft.
Die Götter brauchen manchen guten Mann
Zu ihrem Dienst auf dieser weiten Erde.
Sie haben noch auf dich gezählt; sie gaben
635 Dich nicht dem Vater zum Geleite mit,
Da er unwillig nach dem Orkus ging.

Orest

O wär' ich, seinen Saum ergreifend, ihm
Gefolgt.

Pylades

So haben die, die dich erhielten,
Für mich gesorgt; denn was ich worden wäre,
640 Wenn du nicht lebtest, kann ich mir nicht denken,
Da ich mit dir und deinetwillen nur
Seit meiner Kindheit leb' und leben mag.

Orest

Erinnre mich nicht jener schönen Tage,
Da mir dein Haus die freie Stätte gab,
645 Dein edler Vater klug und liebevoll
Die halberstarrte junge Blüte pflegte;
Da du, ein immer munterer Geselle,
Gleich einem leichten, bunten Schmetterling
Um eine dunkle Blume, jeden Tag
650 Um mich mit neuem Leben gaukeltest,
Mir deine Lust in meine Seele spieltest,
Daß ich, vergessend meiner Not, mit dir
In rascher Jugend hingerissen schwärmte.

Pylades

Da fing mein Leben an, als ich dich liebte.

Orest

655 Sag', meine Not begann, und du sprichst wahr.
Das ist das Ängstliche von meinem Schicksal,
Daß ich, wie ein verpesteter Vertriebner,
Geheimen Schmerz und Tod im Busen trage;
Daß, wo ich den gesundsten Ort betrete,
660 Gar bald um mich die blühenden Gesichter
Den Schmerzenszug langsamen Tod's verraten.

Pylades

Der Nächste wär' ich, diesen Tod zu sterben,
Wenn je dein Hauch, Orest, vergiftete.
Bin ich nicht immer noch voll Mut nnd Lust?
665 Und Lust und Liebe sind die Fittiche
Zu großen Thaten.

Orest

Große Thaten? Ja,
Ich weiß die Zeit, da wir sie vor uns sahn!
Wenn wir zusammen oft dem Wilde nach
Durch Berg' und Thäler rannten, und dereinst,
670 An Brust und Faust dem hohen Ahnherrn gleich,
Mit Keul' und Schwert dem Ungeheuer so,
Dem Räuber auf der Spur zu jagen hofften;
Und dann wir abends an der weiten See
Uns aneinander lehnend ruhig saßen,
675 Die Wellen bis zu unsern Füßen spielten,
Die Welt so weit, so offen vor uns lag;
Da fuhr wohl einer manchmal nach dem Schwert,
Und künft'ge Thaten drangen wie die Sterne
Rings um uns her unzählig aus der Nacht.

Pylades

680 Unendlich ist das Werk, das zu vollführen
Die Seele dringt. Wir möchten jede That
So groß gleich thun, als wie sie wächst und wird,
Wenn jahrelang durch Länder und Geschlechter
Der Mund der Dichter sie vermehrend wälzt.
685 Es klingt so schön, was unsre Väter thaten,
Wenn es, in stillen Abendschatten ruhend,
Der Jüngling mit dem Ton der Harfe schlürft;

Und was wir thun ist, wie es ihnen war,
Voll Müh' und eitel Stückwerk!
690 So laufen wir nach dem, was vor uns flieht,
Und achten nicht des Weges, den wir treten,
Und sehen neben uns der Ahnherrn Tritte
Und ihres Erdelebens Spuren kaum.
Wir eilen immer ihrem Schatten nach,
695 Der göttergleich in einer weiten Ferne
Der Berge Haupt auf goldnen Wolken krönt.
Ich halte nichts von dem, der von sich denkt,
Wie ihn das Volk vielleicht erheben möchte.
Allein, o Jüngling, danke du den Göttern,
700 Daß sie so früh durch dich so viel gethan.

Orest

Wenn sie dem Menschen frohe That bescheren,
Daß er ein Unheil von den Seinen wendet,
Daß er sein Reich vermehrt, die Grenzen sichert,
Und alte Feinde fallen oder fliehn:
705 Dann mag er danken, denn ihm hat ein Gott
Des Lebens erste, letzte Lust gegönnt.
Mich haben sie zum Schlächter auserkoren,
Zum Mörder meiner doch verehrten Mutter,
Und, eine Schandthat schändlich rächend, mich
710 Durch ihren Wink zu Grund' gerichtet. Glaube,
Sie haben es auf Tantals Haus gerichtet,
Und ich, der letzte, soll nicht schuldlos, soll
Nicht ehrenvoll vergehn.

Pylades

Die Götter rächen
Der Väter Missethat nicht an dem Sohn;

715 Ein jeglicher, gut oder böse, nimmt
Sich seinen Lohn mit seiner That hinweg.
Es erbt der Eltern Segen, nicht ihr Fluch.

Orest

Uns führt ihr Segen, dünkt mich, nicht hierher.

Pylades

Doch wenigstens der hohen Götter Wille.

Orest

720 So ist's ihr Wille denn, der uns verderbt.

Pylades

Thu', was sie dir gebieten, und erwarte.
Bringst du die Schwester zu Apollen hin,
Und wohnen beide dann vereint zu Delphi,
Verehrt von einem Volk, das edel denkt,
725 So wird für diese That das hohe Paar
Dir gnädig sein, sie werden aus der Hand
Der Unterird'schen dich erretten. Schon
In diesen heil'gen Hain wagt keine sich.

Orest

So hab' ich wenigstens geruh'gen Tod.

Pylades

730 Ganz anders denk' ich, und nicht ungeschickt
Hab' ich das schon Geschehne mit dem Künft'gen
Verbunden und im stillen ausgelegt.
Vielleicht reift in der Götter Rat schon lange
Das große Werk. Diana sehnet sich
735 Von diesem rauhen Ufer der Barbaren

Und ihren blut'gen Menschenopfern weg.
Wir waren zu der schönen That bestimmt,
Uns wird sie auferlegt, und seltsam sind
Wir an der Pforte schon gezwungen hier.

Orest

740 Mit seltner Kunst flichtst du der Götter Rat
Und deine Wünsche klug in eins zusammen.

Pylades

Was ist des Menschen Klugheit, wenn sie nicht
Auf jener Willen droben achtend lauscht?
Zu einer schweren That beruft ein Gott
745 Den edeln Mann, der viel verbrach, und legt
Ihm auf, was uns unmöglich scheint, zu enden.
Es siegt der Held, und büßend dienet er
Den Göttern und der Welt, die ihn verehrt.

Orest

Bin ich bestimmt zu leben und zu handeln,
750 So nehm' ein Gott von meiner schweren Stirn
Den Schwindel weg, der auf dem schlüpfrigen,
Mit Mutterblut besprengten Pfade fort
Mich zu den Toten reißt. Er trockne gnädig
Die Quelle, die, mir aus der Mutter Wunden
755 Entgegensprudelnd, ewig mich befleckt.

Pylades

Erwart' es ruhiger! Du mehrst das Übel
Und nimmst das Amt der Furien auf dich.
Laß mich nur sinnen, bleibe still! Zuletzt,
Bedarf's zur That vereinter Kräfte, dann

760 Ruf' ich dich auf, und beide schreiten wir
Mit überlegter Kühnheit zur Vollendung.

Orest

Ich hör' Ulyssen reden.

Pylades

Spotte nicht.
Ein jeglicher muß seinen Helden wählen,
Dem er die Wege zum Olymp hinauf
765 Sich nacharbeitet. Laß es mich gestehn:
Mir scheinen List und Klugheit nicht den Mann
Zu schänden, der sich kühnen Thaten weiht.

Orest

Ich schätze den, der tapfer ist und grad.

Pylades

Drum hab' ich keinen Rat von dir verlangt.
770 Schon ist ein Schritt gethan. Von unsern Wächtern
Hab' ich bisher gar vieles ausgelockt.
Ich weiß, ein fremdes, göttergleiches Weib
Hält jenes blutige Gesetz gefesselt;
Ein reines Herz und Weihrauch und Gebet
775 Bringt sie den Göttern dar. Man rühmet hoch
Die Gütige; man glaubet, sie entspringe
Vom Stamm der Amazonen, sei geflohn,
Um einem großen Unheil zu entgehn.

Orest

Es scheint, ihr lichtes Reich verlor die Kraft
780 Durch des Verbrechers Nähe, den der Fluch
Wie eine breite Nacht verfolgt und deckt.
Die fromme Blutgier löst den alten Brauch

Von seinen Fesseln los, uns zu verderben.
Der wilde Sinn des Königs tötet uns;
785 Ein Weib wird uns nicht retten, wenn er zürnt.

Pylades

Wohl uns, daß es ein Weib ist! denn ein Mann,
Der beste selbst, gewöhnet seinen Geist
An Grausamkeit, und macht sich auch zuletzt
Aus dem, was er verabscheut, ein Gesetz,
790 Wird aus Gewohnheit hart und fast unkenntlich.
Allein ein Weib bleibt stet auf einem Sinn,
Den sie gefaßt. Du rechnest sicherer
Auf sie im Guten wie im Bösen. — Still!
Sie kommt; laß uns allein. Ich darf nicht gleich
795 Ihr unsre Namen nennen, unser Schicksal
Nicht ohne Rückhalt ihr vertraun. Du gehst,
Und eh sie mit dir spricht, treff' ich dich noch.

Zweiter Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Pylades.

Iphigenie

Woher du seist und kommst, o Fremdling, sprich!
Mir scheint es, daß ich eher einem Griechen
800 Als einem Scythen dich vergleichen soll.

Sie nimmt ihm die Ketten ab.

Gefährlich ist die Freiheit, die ich gebe;
Die Götter wenden ab, was euch bedroht!

Pylades

O süße Stimme! Vielwillkommner Ton

Der Muttersprach' in einem fremden Lande!
805 Des väterlichen Hafens blaue Berge
Seh' ich Gefangner neu willkommen wieder
Vor meinen Augen. Laß dir diese Freude
Versichern, daß auch ich ein Grieche bin!
Vergessen hab' ich einen Augenblick,
810 Wie sehr ich dein bedarf, und meinen Geist
Der herrlichen Erscheinung zugewendet.
O sage, wenn dir ein Verhängnis nicht
Die Lippe schließt, aus welchem unsrer Stämme
Du deine göttergleiche Herkunft zählst.

Iphigenie

815 Die Priesterin, von ihrer Göttin selbst
Gewählet und geheiligt, spricht mit dir.
Das laß dir g'nügen; sage, wer du seist,
Und welch unselig-waltendes Geschick
Mit dem Gefährten dich hierher gebracht.

Pylades

820 Leicht kann ich dir erzählen, welch ein Übel
Mit lastender Gesellschaft uns verfolgt.
O könntest du der Hoffnung frohen Blick
Uns auch so leicht, du Göttliche, gewähren!
Aus Kreta sind wir, Söhne des Adrasts:
825 Ich bin der jüngste, Cephalus genannt,
Und er Laodamas, der älteste
Des Hauses. Zwischen uns stand rauh und wild
Ein mittlerer, und trennte schon im Spiel
Der ersten Jugend Einigkeit und Lust.
830 Gelassen folgten wir der Mutter Worten,
So lang des Vaters Kraft vor Troja stritt;

Doch als er beutereich zurücke kam
Und kurz darauf verschied, da trennte bald
Der Streit um Reich und Erbe die Geschwister.
835 Ich neigte mich zum ält'sten. Er erschlug
Den Bruder. Um der Blutschuld willen treibt
Die Furie gewaltig ihn umher.
Doch diesem wilden Ufer sendet uns
Apoll, der Delphische, mit Hoffnung zu.
840 Im Tempel seiner Schwester hieß er uns
Der Hilfe segensvolle Hand erwarten.
Gefangen sind wir und hierher gebracht,
Und dir als Opfer dargestellt. Du weißt's.

Iphigenie

Fiel Troja? Teurer Mann, versichr' es mir.

Pylades

845 Es liegt. O sichre du uns Rettung zu!
Beschleunige die Hilfe, die ein Gott
Versprach. Erbarme meines Bruders dich.
O, sag' ihm bald ein gutes holdes Wort;
Doch schone seiner, wenn du mit ihm sprichst,
850 Das bitt' ich eifrig: denn es wird gar leicht
Durch Freud' und Schmerz und durch Erinnerung
Sein Innerstes ergriffen und zerrüttet.
Ein fieberhafter Wahnsinn fällt ihn an,
Und seine schöne freie Seele wird
855 Den Furien zum Raube hingegeben.

Iphigenie

So groß dein Unglück ist, beschwör' ich dich,
Vergiß es, bis du mir genug gethan.

Pylades

Die hohe Stadt, die zehen lange Jahre
Dem ganzen Herr der Griechen widerstand,
860 Liegt nun im Schutte, steigt nicht wieder auf.
Doch manche Gräber unsrer Besten heißen
Uns an das Ufer der Barbaren denken.
Achill liegt dort mit seinem schönen Freunde.

Iphigenie

So seid ihr Götterbilder auch zu Staub!

Pylades

865 Auch Palamedes, Ajax Telamons,
Sie sahn des Vaterlandes Tag nicht wieder.

Iphigenie

Er schweigt von meinem Vater, nennt ihn nicht
Mit den Erschlagnen. Ja, er lebt mir noch!
Ich werd' ihn sehn. O hoffe, liebes Herz!

Pylades

870 Doch selig sind die Tausende, die starben
Den bittersüßen Tod von Feindes Hand;
Denn wüste Schrecken und ein traurig Ende
Hat den Rückkehrenden statt des Triumphs
Ein feindlich aufgebrachter Gott bereitet.
875 Kommt denn der Menschen Stimme nicht zu euch?
So weit sie reicht, trägt sie den Ruf umher
Von unerhörten Thaten, die geschahn.
So ist der Jammer, der Mycenens Hallen
Mit immer wiederholten Seufzern füllt,
880 Dir ein Geheimnis? — Klytämnestra hat

Mit Hilf' Ägisthens den Gemahl berückt,
Am Tage seiner Rückkehr ihn ermordet! —
Ja, du verehrest dieses Königs Haus!
Ich seh' es, deine Brust bekämpft vergebens
885 Das unerwartet ungeheure Wort.
Bist du die Tochter eines Freundes? bist
Du nachbarlich in dieser Stadt geboren?
Verbirg es nicht und rechne mir's nicht zu,
Daß ich der erste diese Greuel melde.

Iphigenie

890 Sag' an, wie ward die schwere That vollbracht?

Pylades

Am Tage seiner Ankunft, da der König,
Vom Bad erquickt und ruhig, sein Gewand
Aus der Gemahlin Hand verlangend, stieg,
Warf die Verderbliche ein faltenreich
895 Und künstlich sich verwirrendes Gewebe
Ihm auf die Schultern, um das edle Haupt;
Und da er wie von einem Netze sich
Vergebens zu entwickeln strebte, schlug
Ägisth ihn, der Verräter, und verhüllt
900 Ging zu den Toten dieser große Fürst.

Iphigenie

Und welchen Lohn erhielt der Mitverschworne?

Pylades

Ein Reich und Bette, das er schon besaß.

Iphigenie

So trieb zur Schandthat eine böse Lust?

Pylades

Und einer alten Rache tief Gefühl.

Iphigenie

905 Und wie beleidigte der König sie?

Pylades

Mit schwerer That, die, wenn Entschuldigung
Des Mordes wäre, sie entschuldigte.
Nach Aulis lockt' er sie und brachte dort,
Als eine Gottheit sich der Griechen Fahrt
910 Mit ungestümen Winden widersetzte,
Die ält'ste Tochter, Iphigenien,
Vor den Altar Dianens, und sie fiel,
Ein blutig Opfer für der Griechen Heil.
Dies, sagt man, hat ihr einen Widerwillen
915 So tief ins Herz geprägt, daß sie dem Werben
Ägisthens sich ergab und den Gemahl
Mit Netzen des Verderbens selbst umschlang.

Iphigenie sich verhüllend

Es ist genug. Du wirst mich wiedersehn.

Pylades allein

Von dem Geschick des Königshauses scheint
920 Sie tief gerührt. Wer sie auch immer sei,
So hat sie selbst den König wohl gekannt
Und ist, zu unserm Glück, aus hohem Hause
Hierher verkauft. Nur stille, liebes Herz,
Und laß dem Stern der Hoffnung, der uns blinkt,
925 Mit frohem Mut uns klug entgegensteuern.

Dritter Aufzug.

Erster Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Orest.

Iphigenie

Unglücklicher, ich löse deine Bande
Zum Zeichen eines schmerzlichern Geschicks.
Die Freiheit, die das Heiligtum gewährt,
Ist, wie der letzte lichte Lebensblick
930 Des schwer Erkrankten, Todesbote. Noch
Kann ich es mir und darf es mir nicht sagen,
Daß ihr verloren seid! Wie könnt' ich euch
Mit mörderischer Hand dem Tode weihen?
Und niemand, wer es sei, darf euer Haupt
935 So lang ich Priesterin Dianens bin,
Berühren. Doch verweigr' ich jene Pflicht,
Wie sie der aufgebrachte König fordert,
So wählt er eine meiner Jungfraun mir
Zu Folgerin, und ich vermag alsdann
940 Mit heißem Wunsch allein euch beizustehn.
O werter Landsmann! Selbst der letzte Knecht,
Der an den Herd der Vatergötter streifte,
Ist uns in fremdem Lande hoch willkommen.
Wie soll ich euch genug mit Freud' und Segen
945 Empfangen, die ihr mir das Bild der Helden,
Die ich von Eltern her verehren lernte,
Entgegenbringet und das innre Herz
Mit neuer, schöner Hoffnung schmeichelnd labet!

Orest

Verbirgst du deinen Namen, deine Herkunft
950 Mit klugem Vorsatz? oder darf ich wissen,
Wer mir, gleich einer Himmlischen, begegnet?

Iphigenie

Du sollst mich kennen. Jetzo sag' mir an,
Was ich nur halb von deinem Bruder hörte,
Das Ende derer, die, von Troja kehrend,
955 Ein hartes unerwartetes Geschick
Auf ihrer Wohnung Schwelle stumm empfing.
Zwar ward ich jung an diesen Strand geführt;
Doch wohl erinnr' ich mich des scheuen Blicks,
Den ich mit Staunen und mit Bangigkeit
960 Auf jene Helden warf. Sie zogen aus,
Als hätte der Olymp sich aufgethan
Und die Gestalten der erlauchten Vorwelt
Zum Schrecken Ilions herabgesendet,
Und Agamemnon war vor allen herrlich!
965 O sage mir: Er fiel, sein Haus betretend,
Durch seiner Frauen und Ägisthens Tücke?

Orest

Du sagst's!

Iphigenie

Weh dir, unseliges Mycen!
So haben Tantals Enkel Fluch auf Fluch
Mit vollen wilden Händen ausgesät!
970 Und, gleich dem Unkraut, wüste Häupter schüttelnd
Und tausendfält'gen Samen um sich streuend,
Den Kindeskindern nahverwandte Mörder
Zur ew'gen Wechselwut erzeugt! — Enthülle,

Was von der Rede deines Bruders schnell
975 Die Finsternis des Schreckens mir verdeckte.
Wie ist des großen Stammes letzter Sohn,
Das holde Kind, bestimmt, des Vaters Rächer
Dereinst zu sein, wie ist Orest dem Tage
Des Bluts entgangen? Hat ein gleich Geschick
980 Mit des Avernus Netzen ihn umschlungen?
Ist er gerettet? Lebt er? Lebt Elektra?

Orest

Sie leben.

Iphigenie

Goldne Sonne, leihe mir
Die schönsten Strahlen, lege sie zum Dank
Vor Jovis Thron! denn ich bin arm und stumm.

Orest

985 Bist du gastfreundlich diesem Königshause,
Bist du mit nähern Banden ihm verbunden,
Wie deine schöne Freude mir verrät,
So bändige dein Herz und halt es fest!
Denn unerträglich muß dem Fröhlichen
990 Ein jäher Rückfall in die Schmerzen sein.
Du weißt nur, merk' ich, Agamemnons Tod.

Iphigenie

Hab' ich an dieser Nachricht nicht genug?

Orest

Du hast des Greuels Hälfte nur erfahren.

Iphigenie

Was fürcht' ich noch? Orest, Elektra leben.

Orest

995 Und fürchtest du für Klytämnestren nichts?

Iphigenie

Sie rettet weder Hoffnung, weder Furcht.

Orest

Auch schied sie aus dem Land der Hoffnung ab.

Iphigenie

Vergoß sie reuig wütend selbst ihr Blut?

Orest

Nein, doch ihr eigen Blut gab ihr den Tod.

Iphigenie

1000 Sprich deutlicher, daß ich nicht länger sinne.
Die Ungewißheit schlägt mir tausendfältig
Die dunkeln Schwingen um das bange Haupt.

Orest

So haben mich die Götter ausersehn
Zum Boten einer That, die ich so gern
1005 Ins klanglos dumpfe Höhlenreich der Nacht
Verbergen möchte? Wider meinen Willen
Zwingt mich dein holder Mund; allein er darf
Auch etwas Schmerzlich's fordern und erhält's.
Am Tage, da der Vater fiel, verbarg
1010 Elektra rettend ihren Bruder; Strophius,
Des Vaters Schwäher, nahm ihn willig auf,
Erzog ihn neben seinem eignen Sohne,
Der, Pylades genannt, die schönsten Bande
Der Freundschaft um den Angekommnen knüpfte.
1015 Und wie sie wuchsen, wuchs in ihrer Seele

Die brennende Begier, des Königs Tod
Zu rächen. Unversehen, fremd gekleidet,
Erreichen sie Mycen, als brächten sie
Die Trauernachricht von Orestens Tode
1020 Mit seiner Asche. Wohl empfänget sie
Die Königin; sie treten in das Haus.
Elektren giebt Orest sich zu erkennen;
Sie bläst der Rache Feuer in ihm auf,
Das vor der Mutter heil'ger Gegenwart
1025 In sich zurückgebrannt war. Stille führt
Sie ihn zum Orte, wo sein Vater fiel,
Wo eine alte leichte Spur des frech
Vergoßnen Blutes oftgewaschnen Boden
Mit blassen ahnungsvollen Streifen färbte.
1030 Mit ihrer Feuerzunge schilderte
Sie jeden Umstand der verruchten That,
Ihr knechtisch elend durchgebrachtes Leben,
Den Übermut der glücklichen Verräter,
Und die Gefahren, die nun der Geschwister
1035 Von einer stiefgewordnen Mutter warteten;
Hier drang sie jenen alten Dolch ihm auf,
Der schon in Tantals Hause grimmig wütete,
Und Klytämnestra fiel durch Sohneshand.

Iphigenie

Unsterbliche, die ihr den reinen Tag
1040 Auf immer neuen Wolken selig lebet,
Habt ihr nur darum mich so manches Jahr
Von Menschen abgesondert, mich so nah
Bei euch gehalten, mir die kindliche
Beschäftigung, des heil'gen Feuers Glut

1045 Zu nähren, aufgetragen, meine Seele
Der Flamme gleich in ew'ger frommer Klarheit
Zu euern Wohnungen hinaufgezogen,
Daß ich nur meines Hauses Greuel später
Und tiefer fühlen sollte? — Sage mir
1050 Vom Unglücksel'gen! Sprich mir von Orest! —

Orest

O könnte man von seinem Tode sprechen!
Wie gärend stieg aus der Erschlagnen Blut
Der Mutter Geist
Und ruft der Nacht uralten Töchtern zu:
1055 „Laßt nicht den Muttermörder entfliehn!
Verfolgt den Verbrecher! Euch ist er geweiht!“
Sie horchen auf, es schaut ihr hohler Blick
Mit der Begier des Adlers um sich her.
Sie rühren sich in ihren schwarzen Höhlen,
1060 Und aus den Winkeln schleichen ihre Gefährten,
Der Zweifel und die Reue, leis' herbei.
Vor ihnen steigt ein Dampf vom Acheron;
In seinen Wolkenkreisen wälzet sich
Die ewige Betrachtung des Geschehnen
1065 Verwirrend um des Schuld'gen Haupt umher.
Und sie, berechtigt zum Verderben, treten
Der gottbesäten Erde schönen Boden,
Von dem ein alter Fluch sie längst verbannte.
Den Flüchtigen verfolgt ihr schneller Fuß;
1070 Sie geben nur, um neu zu schrecken, Rast.

Iphigenie

Unseliger, du bist in gleichem Fall
Und fühlst, was er, der arme Flüchtling, leidet!

Orest

Was sagst du mir? Was wähnst du gleichen Fall?

Iphigenie

Dich drückt ein Brudermord wie jenen; mir
1075 Vertraute dies dein jüngster Bruder schon.

Orest

Ich kann nicht leiden, daß du, große Seele,
Mit einem falschen Wort betrogen werdest.
Ein lügenhaft Gewebe knüpf' ein Fremder
Dem Fremden, sinnreich und der List gewohnt,
1080 Zur Falle vor die Füße; zwischen uns
Sei Wahrheit.
Ich bin Orest! und dieses schuld'ge Haupt
Senkt nach der Grube sich und sucht den Tod;
In jeglicher Gestalt sei er willkommen!
1085 Wer du auch seist, so wünsch' ich Rettung dir
Und meinem Freunde; mir wünsch' ich sie nicht.
Du scheinst hier wider Willen zu verweilen;
Erfindet Rat zur Flucht und laßt mich hier.
Es stürze mein entseelter Leib vom Fels,
1090 Es rauche bis zum Meer hinab mein Blut
Und bringe Fluch dem Ufer der Barbaren!
Geht ihr, daheim im schönen Griechenland
Ein neues Leben freundlich aufzufangen.

Er entfernt sich.

Iphigenie

So steigst du denn, Erfüllung, schönste Tochter
1095 Des größten Vaters, endlich zu mir nieder!
Wie ungeheuer steht dein Bild vor mir;

Kaum reicht mein Blick dir an die Hände, die,
Mit Frucht und Segenskränzen angefüllt,
Die Schätze des Olympus niederbringen.
1100 Wie man den König an dem Übermaß
Der Gaben kennt — denn ihm muß wenig scheinen,
Was Tausenden schon Reichtum ist — so kennt
Man euch, ihr Götter, an gesparten, lang
Und weise zubereiteten Geschenken.
1105 Denn ihr allein wißt, was uns frommen kann,
Und schaut der Zukunft ausgedehntes Reich,
Wenn jedes Abends Stern- und Nebelhülle
Die Aussicht uns verdeckt. Gelassen hört
Ihr unser Flehn, das um Beschleunigung
1110 Euch kindisch bittet; aber eure Hand
Bricht unreif nie die goldnen Himmelsfrüchte;
Und wehe dem, der, ungeduldig sie
Ertrotzend, saure Speise sich zum Tod
Genießt. O laßt das lang erwartete,
1115 Noch kaum gedachte Glück nicht, wie den Schatten
Des abgeschiednen Freundes, eitel mir
Und dreifach schmerzlicher vorübergehn!

Orest, der wieder zu ihr tritt.

Rufst du die Götter an für dich und Pylades,
So nenne meinen Namen nicht mit euerm.
1120 Du rettest den Verbrecher nicht, zu dem
Du dich gesellst, und teilest Fluch und Not.

Iphigenie

Mein Schicksal ist an deines fest gebunden.

Orest

Mit nichten! Laß allein und unbegleitet

Mich zu den Toten gehn. Verhülltest du
1125 In deinen Schleier selbst den Schuldigen,
Du birgst ihn nicht vorm Blick der immer Wachen;
Und deine Gegenwart, du Himmlische,
Drängt sie nur seitwärts und verscheucht sie nicht.
Sie dürfen mit den ehrnen frechen Füßen
1130 Des heil'gen Waldes Boden nicht betreten;
Doch hör' ich aus der Ferne hier und da
Ihr gräßliches Gelächter. Wölfe harren
So um den Baum, auf den ein Reisender
Sich rettete. Da draußen ruhen sie
1135 Gelagert; und verlass' ich diesen Hain,
Dann steigen sie, die Schlangenhäupter schüttelnd,
Von allen Seiten Staub erregend, auf
Und treiben ihre Beute vor sich her.

Iphigenie

Kannst du, Orest, ein freundlich Wort vernehmen?

Orest

1140 Spar' es für einen Freund der Götter auf.

Iphigenie

Sie geben dir zu neuer Hoffnung Licht.

Orest

Durch Rauch und Qualm seh' ich den matten Schein
Des Totenflusses mir zur Hölle leuchten.

Iphigenie

Hast du Elektren, eine Schwester nur?

Orest

1145 Die eine kannt' ich; doch die ält'ste nahm

Ihr gut Geschick, das uns so schrecklich schien,
Beizeiten aus dem Elend unsers Hauses.
O laß dein Fragen und geselle dich
Nicht auch zu den Erinnyen; sie blasen
1150 Mir schadenfroh die Asche von der Seele
Und leiden nicht, daß sich die letzten Kohlen
Von unsers Hauses Schreckensbrande still
In mir verglimmen. Soll die Glut denn ewig,
Vorsätzlich angefacht, mit Höllenschwefel
1155 Genährt, mir auf der Seele marternd brennen?

Iphigenie

Ich bringe süßes Rauchwerk in die Flamme.
O laß den reinen Hauch der Liebe dir
Die Glut des Busens leise wehend kühlen.
Orest, mein Teurer, kannst du nicht vernehmen?
1160 Hat das Geleit der Schreckensgötter so
Das Blut in deinen Adern aufgetrocknet?
Schleicht, wie vom Haupt der gräßlichen Gorgone,
Versteinernd dir ein Zauber durch die Glieder?
O wenn vergoßnen Mutterblutes Stimme
1165 Zur Höll' hinab mit dumpfen Tönen ruft,
Soll nicht der reinen Schwester Segenswort
Hilfreiche Götter vom Olympus rufen?

Orest

Es ruft! es ruft! So willst du mein Verderben?
Verbirgt in dir sich eine Rachegöttin?
1170 Wer bist du, deren Stimme mir entsetzlich
Das Innerste in seinen Tiefen wendet?

Iphigenie

Es zeigt sich dir im tiefsten Herzen an:
Orest, ich bin's! Sieh Iphigenien!
Ich lebe!

Orest

Du!

Iphigenie

Mein Bruder!

Orest

Laß! Hinweg!
1175 Ich rate dir, berühre nicht die Locken!
Wie von Kreusas Brautkleid zündet sich
Ein unauslöschlich Feuer von mir fort.
Laß mich! Wie Herkules will ich Unwürd'ger
Den Tod voll Schmach, in mich verschlossen, sterben.

Iphigenie

1180 Du wirst nicht untergehn! O daß ich nur
Ein ruhig Wort von dir vernehmen könnte!
O löse meine Zweifel, laß des Glückes,
Des lang erflehten, mich auch sicher werden.
Es wälzet sich ein Rad von Freud' und Schmerz
1185 Durch meine Seele. Von dem fremden Manne
Entfernet mich ein Schauer; doch es reißt
Mein Innerstes gewaltig mich zum Bruder.

Orest

Ist hier Lyäens Tempel? Und ergreift
Unbändig-heil'ge Wut die Priesterin?

Iphigenie

1190 O höre mich! O sieh mich an, wie mir

Nach einer langen Zeit das Herz sich öffnet
Der Seligkeit, dem Liebsten, was die Welt
Noch für mich tragen kann, das Haupt zu küssen,
Mit meinen Armen, die den leeren Winden
1195 Nur ausgebreitet waren, dich zu fassen!
O laß mich! Laß mich! Denn es quillet heller
Nicht vom Parnaß die ew'ge Quelle sprudelnd
Von Fels zu Fels ins goldne Thal hinab,
Wie Freude mir vom Herzen wallend fließt
1200 Und wie ein selig Meer mich rings umfängt.
Orest! Orest! Mein Bruder!

Orest

Schöne Nymphe,
Ich traue dir und deinem Schmeicheln nicht.
Diana fordert strenge Dienerinnen
Und rächet das entweihte Heiligtum.
1205 Entferne deinen Arm von meiner Brust!
Und wenn du einen Jüngling rettend lieben,
Das schöne Glück ihm zärtlich bieten willst:
So wende meinem Freunde dein Gemüt,
Dem würd'gern Manne, zu. Er irrt umher
1210 Auf jenem Felsenpfade; such' ihn auf,
Weis' ihn zurecht und schone meiner.

Iphigenie

Fasse
Dich, Bruder, und erkenne die Gefundne!
Schilt einer Schwester reine Himmelsfreude
Nicht unbesonnene, strafbare Lust.
1215 O nehmt den Wahn ihm von dem starren Auge,
Daß uns der Augenblick der höchsten Freude

Nicht dreifach elend mache! Sie ist hier,
Die längst verlorne Schwester. Vom Altar
Riß mich die Göttin weg und rettete
1220 Hierher mich in ihr eigen Heiligtum.
Gefangen bist du, dargestellt zum Opfer,
Und findest in der Priesterin die Schwester.

Orest

Unselige! So mag die Sonne denn
Die letzten Greuel unsers Hauses sehn!
1225 Ist nicht Elektra hier? damit auch sie
Mit uns zu Grunde gehe, nicht ihr Leben
Zu schwererem Geschick und Leiden friste.
Gut, Priesterin! ich folge zum Altar;
Der Brudermord ist hergebrachte Sitte
1230 Des alten Stammes; und ich danke, Götter,
Daß ihr mich ohne Kinder auszurotten
Beschlossen habt. Und laß dir raten, habe
Die Sonne nicht zu lieb und nicht die Sterne;
Komm, folge mir ins dunkle Reich hinab!
1235 Wie sich vom Schwefelpfuhl erzeugte Drachen,
Bekämpfend die verwandte Brut, verschlingen,
Zerstört sich selbst das wütende Geschlecht;
Komm kinderlos und schuldlos mit hinab!
Du siehst mich mit Erbarmen an? Laß ab!
1240 Mit solchen Blicken suchte Klytämnestra
Sich einen Weg nach ihres Sohnes Herzen;
Doch sein geschwungner Arm traf ihre Brust.
Die Mutter fiel! — Tritt auf, unwill'ger Geist!
Im Kreis geschlossen tretet an, ihr Furien,
1245 Und wohnet dem willkommnen Schauspiel bei,

Dem letzten, gräßlichsten, das ihr bereitet!
Nicht Haß und Rache schärfen ihren Dolch;
Die liebevolle Schwester wird zur That
Gezwungen. Weine nicht! Du hast nicht schuld.
1250 Seit meinen ersten Jahren hab' ich nichts
Geliebt, wie ich dich lieben könnte, Schwester.
Ja, schwinge deinen Stahl, verschone nicht,
Zerreiße diesen Busen und eröffne
Den Strömen, die hier sieden, einen Weg.

Er sinkt in Ermattung.

Iphigenie

1255 Allein zu tragen dieses Glück und Elend,
Vermag ich nicht. — Wo bist du, Pylades;
Wo find' ich deine Hilfe, teurer Mann?

Sie entfernt sich suchend.

Zweiter Auftritt.

Orest, aus seiner Betäubung erwachend und sich aufrichtend.

Noch einen! reiche mir aus Lethes Fluten
Den letzten kühlen Becher der Erquickung!
1260 Bald ist der Krampf des Lebens aus dem Busen
Hinweggespült; bald fließet still mein Geist,
Der Quelle des Vergessens hingegeben,
Zu euch, ihr Schatten, in die ew'gen Nebel.
Gefällig laßt in eurer Ruhe sich
1265 Den umgetriebnen Sohn der Erde laben! —
Welch ein Gelispel hör' ich in den Zweigen,
Welch ein Geräusch aus jener Dämm'rung säuseln?
Sie kommen schon, den neuen Gast zu sehn!

Wer ist die Schar, die herrlich miteinander
1270 Wie ein versammelt Fürstenhaus sich freut?
Sie gehen friedlich, Alt' und Junge, Männer
Mit Weibern; göttergleich und ähnlich scheinen
Die wandelnden Gestalten. Ja, sie sind's,
Die Ahnherrn meines Hauses! — Mit Thyesten
1275 Geht Atreus in vertraulichen Gesprächen,
Die Knaben schlüpfen scherzend um sie her.
Ist keine Feindschaft hier mehr unter euch?
Verlosch die Rache wie das Licht der Sonne?
So bin auch ich willkommen, und ich darf
1280 In euern feierlichen Zug mich mischen.
Willkommen, Väter! euch grüßt Orest,
Von euerm Stamme der letzte Mann;
Was ihr gesät, hat er geerntet:
Mit Fluch beladen, stieg er herab.
1285 Doch leichter träget sich hier jede Bürde:
Nehmt ihn, o nehmt ihn in euern Kreis! —
Dich, Atreus, ehr' ich, auch dich, Thyesten;
Wir sind hier alle der Feindschaft los. —
Zeigt mir den Vater, den ich nur einmal
1290 Im Leben sah! — Bist du's, mein Vater?
Und führst die Mutter vertraut mit dir?
Darf Klytämnestra die Hand dir reichen,
So darf Orest auch zu ihr treten
Und darf ihr sagen: Sieh deinen Sohn! —
1295 Seht euern Sohn! Heißt ihn willkommen.
Auf Erden war in unserm Hause
Der Gruß des Mordes gewisse Losung,
Und das Geschlecht des alten Tantalus
Hat seine Freuden jenseits der Nacht.

1300 Ihr ruft: Willkommen! und nehmt mich auf.
O führt zum Alten, zum Ahnherrn mich!
Wo ist der Alte? Daß ich ihn sehe,
Das teure Haupt, das vielverehrte,
Das mit den Göttern zu Rate saß.
1305 Ihr scheint zu zaudern, euch wegzuwenden?
Was ist es? Leidet der Göttergleiche?
Weh mir! es haben die Übermächt'gen
Der Heldenbrust grausame Qualen
Mit ehrnen Ketten fest aufgeschmiedet.

Dritter Auftritt.

Orest. Iphigenie. Pylades.

Orest

1310 Seid ihr auch schon herabgekommen?
Wohl, Schwester, dir! Noch fehlt Elektra:
Ein güt'ger Gott send' uns die eine
Mit sanften Pfeilen auch schnell herab.
Dich, armer Freund, muß ich bedauern!
1315 Komm mit, komm mit, zu Plutos Thron,
Als neue Gäste den Wirt zu grüßen!

Iphigenie

Geschwister, die ihr an dem weiten Himmel
Das schöne Licht bei Tag und Nacht herauf
Den Menschen bringet und den Abgeschiednen
1320 Nicht leuchten dürfet, rettet uns Geschwister!
Du liebst, Diane, deinen holden Bruder
Vor allem, was dir Erd' und Himmel bietet.
Und wendest dein jungfräulich Angesicht

Nach seinem ew'gen Lichte sehnend still.
1325 O laß den Einz'gen, Spätgefundnen mir
Nicht in der Finsternis des Wahnsinns rasen!
Und ist dein Wille, da du hier mich bargst,
Nunmehr vollendet, willst du mir durch ihn
Und ihm durch mich die sel'ge Hilfe geben:
1330 So lös' ihn von den Banden jenes Fluchs,
Daß nicht die teure Zeit der Rettung schwinde.

Pylades

Erkennst du uns und diesen heil'gen Hain
Und dieses Licht, das nicht den Toten leuchtet?
Fühlst du den Arm des Freundes und der Schwester,
1335 Die dich noch fest, noch lebend halten? Fass'
Uns kräftig an; wir sind nicht leere Schatten.
Merk' auf mein Wort! Vernimm es! Raffe dich
Zusammen! Jeder Augenblick ist teuer,
Und unsre Rückkehr hängt an zarten Fäden,
1340 Die, scheint es, eine günst'ge Parze spinnt.

Orest zu Iphigenien

Laß mich zum erstenmal mit freiem Herzen
In deinen Armen reine Freude haben!
Ihr Götter, die mit flammender Gewalt
Ihr schwere Wolken aufzuzehren wandelt
1345 Und gnädig-ernst den lang erflehten Regen
Mit Donnerstimmen und mit Windesbrausen
In wilden Strömen auf die Erde schüttet;
Doch bald der Menschen grausendes Erwarten
In Segen auflöst und das bange Staunen
1350 In Freudeblick und lauten Dank verwandelt,

Wenn in den Tropfen frischerquickter Blätter
Die neue Sonne tausendfach sich spiegelt
Und Iris freundlich bunt mit leichter Hand
Den grauen Flor der letzten Wolken trennt:
1355 O laßt mich auch in meiner Schwester Armen,
An meines Freundes Brust, was ihr mir gönnt,
Mit vollem Dank genießen und behalten!
Es löset sich der Fluch, mir sagt's das Herz.
Die Eumeniden ziehn, ich höre sie,
1360 Zum Tartarus, und schlagen hinter sich
Die ehrnen Thore fernabdonnernd zu.
Die Erde dampft erquickenden Geruch
Und ladet mich auf ihren Flächen ein,
Nach Lebensfreud' und großer That zu jagen.

Pylades

1365 Versäumt die Zeit nicht, die gemessen ist!
Der Wind, der unsre Segel schwellt, er bringe
Erst unsre volle Freude zum Olymp.
Kommt! Es bedarf hier schnellen Rat und Schluß.

Vierter Aufzug.

Erster Auftritt.

Iphigenie.

Denken die Himmlischen
1370 Einem der Erdgebornen
Viele Verwirrungen zu,
Und bereiten sie ihm
Von der Freude zu Schmerzen
Und von Schmerzen zur Freude
1375 Tieferschütternden Übergang:
Dann erziehen sie ihm
In der Nähe der Stadt,
Oder am fernen Gestade,
Daß in Stunden der Not
1380 Auch die Hilfe bereit sei,
Einen ruhigen Freund.
O segnet, Götter, unsern Pylades
Und was er immer unternehmen mag!
Er ist der Arm des Jünglings in der Schlacht,
1385 Des Greises leuchtend Aug' in der Versammlung,
Denn seine Seel' ist stille; sie bewahrt
Der Ruhe heil'ges unerschöpftes Gut,
Und den Umhergetriebnen reichet er
Aus ihren Tiefen Rat und Hilfe. Mich
1390 Riß er vom Bruder los; den staunt' ich an
Und immer wieder an und konnte mir
Das Glück nicht eigen machen, ließ ihn nicht

Aus meinen Armen los und fühlte nicht
Die Nähe der Gefahr, die uns umgiebt.
1395 Jetzt gehn sie, ihren Anschlag auszuführen,
Der See zu, wo das Schiff mit den Gefährten,
In einer Bucht versteckt, aufs Zeichen lauert,
Und haben kluges Wort mir in den Mund
Gegeben, mich gelehrt, was ich dem König
1400 Antworte, wenn er sendet und das Opfer
Mir dringender gebietet. Ach! ich sehe wohl,
Ich muß mich leiten lassen wie ein Kind.
Ich habe nicht gelernt, zu hinterhalten,
Noch jemand etwas abzulisten. Weh!
1405 O weh der Lüge! Sie befreiet nicht,
Wie jedes andre wahr gesprochne Wort,
Die Brust; sie macht uns nicht getrost, sie ängstet
Den, der sie heimlich schmiedet, und sie kehrt,
Ein losgedrückter Pfeil, von einem Gotte
1410 Gewendet und versagend, sich zurück
Und trifft den Schützen. Sorg' auf Sorge schwankt
Mir durch die Brust. Es greift die Furie
Vielleicht den Bruder auf dem Boden wieder
Des ungeweihten Ufers grimmig an.
1415 Entdeckt man sie vielleicht? Mich dünkt, ich höre
Gewaffnete sich nahen! — Hier! — Der Bote
Kommt von dem Könige mit schnellem Schritt.
Es schlägt mein Herz, es trübt sich meine Seele,
Da ich des Mannes Angesicht erblicke,
1420 Dem ich mit falschem Wort begegnen soll.

Zweiter Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Arkas.

Beschleunige das Opfer, Priesterin!
Der König wartet, und es harrt das Volk.

Iphigenie

Ich folgte meiner Pflicht und deinem Wink,
Wenn unvermutet nicht ein Hindernis
1425 Sich zwischen mich und die Erfüllung stellte.

Arkas

Was ist's, das den Befehl des Königs hindert?

Iphigenie

Der Zufall, dessen wir nicht Meister sind.

Arkas

So sage mir's, daß ich's ihm schnell vermelde,
Denn er beschloß bei sich der beiden Tod.

Iphigenie

1430 Die Götter haben ihn noch nicht beschlossen.
Der ält'ste dieser Männer trägt die Schuld
Des nahverwandten Bluts, das er vergoß.
Die Furien verfolgen seinen Pfad,
Ja, in dem innern Tempel faßte selbst
1435 Das Übel ihn, und seine Gegenwart
Entheiligte die reine Stätte. Nun
Eil' ich mit meinen Jungfraun, an dem Meere
Der Göttin Bild mit frischer Welle netzend,
Geheimnisvolle Weihe zu begehn.
1440 Es störe niemand unsern stillen Zug!

Arkas

Ich melde dieses neue Hindernis
Dem Könige geschwind; beginne du
Das heil'ge Werk nicht eh' bis er's erlaubt.

Iphigenie

Dies ist allein der Priest'rin überlassen.

Arkas

1445 Solch seltnen Fall soll auch der König wissen.

Iphigenie

Sein Rat wie sein Befehl verändert nichts.

Arkas

Oft wird der Mächtige zum Schein gefragt.

Iphigenie

Erdringe nicht, was ich versagen sollte.

Arkas

Versage nicht, was gut und nützlich ist.

Iphigenie

1450 Ich gebe nach, wenn du nicht säumen willst.

Arkas

Schnell bin ich mit der Nachricht in dem Lager
Und schnell mit seinen Worten hier zurück.
O könnt' ich ihm noch eine Botschaft bringen,
Die alles löste, was uns jetzt verwirrt,
1455 Denn du hast nicht des Treuen Rat geachtet.

Iphigenie

Was ich vermochte, hab' ich gern gethan.

Arkas

Noch änderst du den Sinn zur rechten Zeit.

Iphigenie

Das steht nun einmal nicht in unsrer Macht.

Arkas

Du hältst unmöglich was dir Mühe kostet.

Iphigenie

1460 Dir scheint es möglich, weil der Wunsch dich trügt.

Arkas

Willst du denn alles so gelassen wagen?

Iphigenie

Ich hab' es in der Götter Hand gelegt.

Arkas

Sie pflegen Menschen menschlich zu erretten.

Iphigenie

Auf ihren Fingerzeig kommt alles an.

Arkas

1465 Ich sage dir, es liegt in deiner Hand.
Des Königs aufgebrachter Sinn allein
Bereitet diesen Fremden bittern Tod.
Das Heer entwöhnte längst vom harten Opfer
Und von dem blut'gen Dienste sein Gemüt.

1470 Ja, mancher, den ein widriges Geschick
An fremdes Ufer trug, empfand es selbst,
Wie göttergleich dem armen Irrenden,
Umhergetrieben an der fremden Grenze,
Ein freundlich Menschenangesicht begegnet.
1475 O wende nicht von uns, was du vermagst!
Du endest leicht, was du begonnen hast:
Denn nirgends baut die Milde, die herab
In menschlicher Gestalt vom Himmel kommt,
Ein Reich sich schneller, als wo trüb und wild
1480 Ein neues Volk, voll Leben, Mut und Kraft,
Sich selbst und banger Ahnung überlassen,
Des Menschenlebens schwere Bürden trägt.

Iphigenie

Erschüttre meine Seele nicht, die du
Nach deinem Willen nicht bewegen kannst.

Arkas

1485 So lang es Zeit ist, schont man weder Mühe
Noch eines guten Wortes Wiederholung.

Iphigenie

Du machst dir Müh', und mir erregst du Schmerzen;
Vergebens beides; darum laß mich nun.

Arkas

Die Schmerzen sind's, die ich zu Hilfe rufe;
1490 Denn es sind Freunde, Gutes raten sie.

Iphigenie

Sie fassen meine Seele mit Gewalt,
Doch tilgen sie den Widerwillen nicht.

Arkas

Fühlt eine schöne Seele Widerwillen
Für eine Wohlthat, die der Edle reicht?

Iphigenie

1495 Ja, wenn der Edle, was sich nicht geziemt,
Statt meines Dankes mich erwerben will.

Arkas

Wer keine Neigung fühlt, dem mangelt es
An einem Worte der Entschuld'gung nie.
Dem Fürsten sag' ich an, was hier geschehn.
1500 O wiederholtest du in deiner Seele,
Wie edel er sich gegen dich betrug
Von deiner Ankunft an bis diesen Tag!

Dritter Auftritt.

Iphigenie allein.

Von dieses Mannes Rede fühl' ich mir
Zur ungelegnen Zeit das Herz im Busen
1505 Auf einmal umgewendet. Ich erschrecke! —
Denn wie die Flut mit schnellen Strömen wachsend
Die Felsen überspült, die in dem Sand
Am Ufer liegen, so bedeckte ganz
Ein Freudenstrom mein Innerstes. Ich hielt
1510 In meinen Armen das Unmögliche.
Es schien sich eine Wolke wieder sanft
Um mich zu legen, von der Erde mich
Empor zu heben und in jenen Schlummer
Mich einzuwiegen, den die gute Göttin

1515 Um meine Schläfe legte, da ihr Arm
Mich rettend faßte. — Meinen Bruder
Ergriff das Herz mit einziger Gewalt;
Ich horchte nur auf seines Freundes Rat;
Nur sie zu retten, drang die Seele vorwärts.
1520 Und wie den Klippen einer wüsten Insel
Der Schiffer gern den Rücken wendet, so
Lag Tauris hinter mir. Nun hat die Stimme
Des treuen Manns mich wieder aufgeweckt,
Daß ich auch Menschen hier verlasse, mich
1525 Erinnert. Doppelt wird mir der Betrug
Verhaßt. O bleibe ruhig, meine Seele!
Beginnst du nun zu schwanken und zu zweifeln?
Den festen Boden deiner Einsamkeit
Mußt du verlassen! Wieder eingeschifft,
1530 Ergreifen dich die Wellen schaukelnd, trüb
Und bang verkennest du die Welt und dich.

Vierter Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Pylades.

Pylades

Wo ist sie? daß ich ihr mit schnellen Worten
Die frohe Botschaft unsrer Rettung bringe!

Iphigenie

Du siehst mich hier voll Sorgen und Erwartung
1535 Des sichern Trostes, den du mir versprichst.

Pylades

Dein Bruder ist geheilt! Den Felsenboden

Des ungeweihten Ufers und den Sand
Betraten wir mit fröhlichen Gesprächen;
Der Hain blieb hinter uns, wir merkten's nicht.
1540 Und herrlicher und immer herrlicher
Umloderte der Jugend schöne Flamme
Sein lockig Haupt; sein volles Auge glühte
Von Mut und Hoffnung, und sein freies Herz
Ergab sich ganz der Freude, ganz der Lust,
1545 Dich, seine Retterin, und mich zu retten.

Iphigenie

Gesegnet seist du, und es möge nie
Von deiner Lippe, die so Gutes sprach,
Der Ton des Leidens und der Klage tönen!

Pylades

Ich bringe mehr als das; denn schön begleitet,
1550 Gleich einem Fürsten, pflegt das Glück zu nahn.
Auch die Gefährten haben wir gefunden.
In einer Felsenbucht verbargen sie
Das Schiff und saßen traurig und erwartend.
Sie sahen deinen Bruder, und es regten
1555 Sich alle jauchzend, und sie baten dringend,
Der Abfahrt Stunde zu beschleunigen.
Es sehnet jede Faust sich nach dem Ruder,
Und selbst ein Wind erhob vom Lande lispelnd,
Von allen gleich bemerkt, die holden Schwingen.
1560 Drum laß uns eilen, führe mich zum Tempel,
Laß mich das Heiligtum betreten, laß
Mich unsrer Wünsche Ziel verehrend fassen!
Ich bin allein genug, der Göttin Bild
Auf wohlgeübten Schultern wegzutragen;

1565 Wie sehn' ich mich nach der erwünschten Last!

Er geht gegen den Tempel unter den letzten Worten, ohne zu bemerken, daß Iphigenie nicht folgt, endlich kehrt er sich um.

Du stehst und zauderst — sage mir — du schweigst!
Du scheinst verworren! Widersetzet sich
Ein neues Unheil unserm Glück? Sag' an!
Hast du dem Könige das kluge Wort
1570 Vermelden lassen, das wir abgeredet?

Iphigenie

Ich habe, teurer Mann; doch wirst du schelten.
Ein schweigender Verweis war mir dein Anblick!
Des Königs Bote kam, und wie du es
Mir in den Mund gelegt, so sagt' ich's ihm.
1575 Er schien zu staunen und verlangte dringend,
Die seltne Feier erst dem Könige
Zu melden, seinen Willen zu vernehmen;
Und nun erwart' ich seine Wiederkehr.

Pylades

Weh uns! Erneuert schwebt nun die Gefahr
1580 Um unsre Schläfe! Warum hast du nicht
Ins Priesterrecht dich weislich eingehüllt?

Iphigenie

Als ein Hülle hab' ich's nie gebraucht.

Pylades

So wirst du, reine Seele, dich und uns
Zu Grunde richten. Warum dacht' ich nicht
1585 Auf diesen Fall voraus und lehrte dich
Auch dieser Fordrung auszuweichen!

Iphigenie

Schilt
Nur mich, die Schuld ist mein, ich fühl' es wohl;
Doch konnt' ich anders nicht dem Mann begegnen,
Der mit Vernunft und Ernst von mir verlangte,
1590 Was ihm mein Herz als Recht gestehen mußte.

Pylades

Gefährlicher zieht sich's zusammen; doch auch so
Laß uns nicht zagen oder unbesonnen
Und übereilt uns selbst verraten. Ruhig
Erwarte du die Wiederkunft des Boten
1595 Und dann steh fest, er bringe, was er will:
Denn solcher Weihung Feier anzuordnen,
Gehört der Priesterin und nicht dem König.
Und fordert er, den fremden Mann zu sehn,
Der von dem Wahnsinn schwer belastet ist,
1600 So lehn' es ab, als hieltest du uns beide
Im Tempel wohl verwahrt. So schaff' uns Luft,
Daß wir aufs eiligste, den heil'gen Schatz
Dem rauh unwürd'gen Volk entwendend, fliehn.
Die besten Zeichen sendet uns Apoll,
1605 Und eh wir die Bedingung fromm erfüllen,
Erfüllt er göttlich sein Versprechen schon.
Orest ist frei, geheilt! — Mit dem Befreiten,
O, führet uns hinüber, günst'ge Winde,
Zur Felseninsel, die der Gott bewohnt;
1610 Dann nach Mycen, daß es lebendig werde,
Daß von der Asche des verloschnen Herdes
Die Vatergötter fröhlich sich erheben,
Und schönes Feuer ihre Wohnungen

Umleuchte! Deine Hand soll ihnen Weihrauch
1615 Zuerst aus goldnen Schalen streuen. Du
Bringst über jene Schwelle Heil und Leben wieder,
Entsühnst den Fluch und schmückest neu die Deinen
Mit frischen Lebensblüten herrlich aus.

Iphigenie

Vernehm' ich dich, so wendet sich, o Teurer,
1620 Wie sich die Blume nach der Sonne wendet,
Die Seele, von dem Strahle deiner Worte
Getroffen, sich dem süßen Troste nach.
Wie köstlich ist des gegenwärt'gen Freundes
Gewisse Rede, deren Himmelskraft
1625 Ein Einsamer entbehrt und still versinkt.
Denn langsam reift, verschlossen in dem Busen,
Gedank' ihm und Entschluß; die Gegenwart
Des Liebenden entwickelte sie leicht.

Pylades

Leb wohl! Die Freunde will ich nun geschwind
1630 Beruhigen, die sehnlich wartend harren.
Dann komm' ich schnell zurück und lausche hier
Im Felsenbusch versteckt auf deinen Wink —
Was sinnest du? Auf einmal überschwebt
Ein stiller Trauerzug die freie Stirne.

Iphigenie

1635 Verzeih! Wie leichte Wolken von der Sonne,
So zieht mir vor der Seele leichte Sorge
Und Bangigkeit vorüber.

Pylades

Fürchte nicht!
Betrüglich schloß die Furcht mit der Gefahr
Ein enges Bündnis; beide sind Gesellen.

Iphigenie

1640 Die Sorge nenn' ich edel, die mich warnt,
Den König, der mein zweiter Vater ward,
Nicht tückisch zu betrügen, zu berauben.

Pylades

Der deinen Bruder schlachtet, dem entfliehst du.

Iphigenie

Es ist derselbe, der mir Gutes that.

Pylades

1645 Das ist nicht Undank, was die Not gebeut.

Iphigenie

Es bleibt wohl Undank; nur die Not entschuldigt's.

Pylades

Vor Göttern und vor Menschen dich gewiß.

Iphigenie

Allein mein eigen Herz ist nicht befriedigt.

Pylades

Zu strenge Fordrung ist verborgner Stolz.

Iphigenie

1650 Ich untersuche nicht, ich fühle nur.

Pylades

Fühlst du dich recht, so mußt du dich verehren.

Iphigenie

Ganz unbefleckt genießt sich nur das Herz.

Pylades

So hast du dich im Tempel wohl bewahrt;
Das Leben lehrt uns, weniger mit uns
1655 Und andern strenge sein; du lernst es auch.
So wunderbar ist dies Geschlecht gebildet,
So vielfach ist's verschlungen und verknüpft,
Daß keiner in sich selbst noch mit den andern
Sich rein und unverworren halten kann.
1660 Auch sind wir nicht bestellt uns selbst zu richten.
Zu wandeln und auf seinen Weg zu sehen
Ist eines Menschen erste, nächste Pflicht:
Denn selten schätzt er recht, was er gethan,
Und was er thut, weiß er fast nie zu schätzen.

Iphigenie

1665 Fast überred'st du mich zu deiner Meinung.

Pylades

Braucht's Überredung wo die Wahl versagt ist?
Den Bruder, dich, und einen Freund zu retten
Ist nur e i n Weg; fragt sich's ob wir ihn gehen?

Iphigenie

O laß mich zaudern! denn du thätest selbst
1670 Ein solches Unrecht keinem Mann gelassen,
Dem du für Wohlthat dich verpflichtest hieltest.

Pylades

Wenn wir zu Grunde gehen wartet dein
Ein härtrer Vorwurf, der Verzweiflung trägt.
Man sieht, du bist nicht an Verlust gewohnt,
1675 Da du, dem großen Übel zu entgehen,
Ein falsches Wort nicht einmal opfern willst.

Iphigenie

O trüg' ich doch ein männlich Herz in mir!
Das, wenn es einen kühnen Vorsatz hegt,
Vor jeder andern Stimme sich verschließt.

Pylades

1680 Du weigerst dich umsonst; die ehrne Hand
Der Not gebietet, und ihr ernster Wink
Ist oberstes Gesetz, dem Götter selbst
Sich unterwerfen müssen. Schweigend herrscht
Des ew'gen Schicksals unberatne Schwester.
1685 Was sie dir auferlegt, das trage; thu'
Was sie gebeut. Das andre weißt du. Bald
Komm' ich zurück, aus deiner heil'gen Hand
Der Rettung schönes Siegel zu empfangen.

Fünfter Auftritt.

Iphigenie allein.

Ich muß ihm folgen, denn die Meinigen
1690 Seh' ich in dringender Gefahr. Doch ach!
Mein eigen Schicksal macht mir bang und bänger.
O soll ich nicht die stille Hoffnung retten,

Die in der Einsamkeit ich schön genährt?
Soll dieser Fluch denn ewig walten? Soll
1695 Nie dies Geschlecht mit einem neuen Segen
Sich wieder heben? — Nimmt doch alles ab!
Das beste Glück, des Lebens schönste Kraft
Ermattet endlich, warum nicht der Fluch?
So hofft' ich denn vergebens, hier verwahrt,
1700 Von meines Hauses Schicksal abgeschieden,
Dereinst mit reiner Hand und reinem Herzen
Die schwer befleckte Wohnung zu entsühnen!
Kaum wird in meinen Armen mir ein Bruder
Vom grimm'gen Übel wundervoll und schnell
1705 Geheilt, kaum naht ein lang erflehtes Schiff,
Mich in den Port der Vaterwelt zu leiten,
So legt die taube Not ein doppelt Laster
Mit ehrner Hand mir auf: das heilige
Mir anvertraute, viel verehrte Bild
1710 Zu rauben und den Mann zu hintergehn,
Dem ich mein Leben und mein Schicksal danke.
O daß in meinem Busen nicht zuletzt
Ein Widerwille keime! der Titanen,
Der alten Götter tiefer Haß auf euch,
1715 Olympier, nicht auch die zarte Brust
Mit Geierklauen fasse! Rettet mich
Und rettet euer Bild in meiner Seele!

Vor meinen Ohren tönt das alte Lied —
Vergessen hatt' ich's und vergaß es gern —
1720 Das Lied der Parzen, das sie grausend sangen,
Als Tantalus vom goldnen Stuhle fiel;
Sie litten mit dem edeln Freunde; grimmig

War ihre Brust und furchtbar ihr Gesang.
In unsrer Jugend sang's die Amme mir
1725 Und den Geschwistern vor, ich merkt' es wohl.

Es fürchte die Götter
Das Menschengeschlecht!
Sie halten die Herrschaft
In ewigen Händen,
1730 Und können sie brauchen
Wie's ihnen gefällt.

Der fürchte sie doppelt,
Den je sie erheben!
Auf Klippen und Wolken
1735 Sind Stühle bereitet
Um goldene Tische.

Erhebet ein Zwist sich,
So stürzen die Gäste
Geschmäht und geschändet
1740 In nächtliche Tiefen,
Und harren vergebens,
Im Finstern gebunden,
Gerechten Gerichtes.

Sie aber, sie bleiben
1745 In ewigen Festen
An goldenen Tischen.
Sie schreiten vom Berge
Zu Bergen hinüber;
Aus Schlünden der Tiefe

1750 Dampft ihnen der Atem
Erstickter Titanen,
Gleich Opfergerüchen,
Ein leichtes Gewölke.

Es wenden die Herrscher
1755 Ihr segnendes Auge
Von ganzen Geschlechtern,
Und meiden, im Enkel
Die ehmals geliebten
Still redenden Züge
1760 Des Ahnherrn zu sehn.

So sangen die Parzen:
Es horcht der Verbannte
In nächtlichen Höhlen
Der Alte die Lieder,
1765 Denkt Kinder und Enkel
Und schüttelt das Haupt.

Fünfter Aufzug.

Erster Auftritt.

Thoas. Arkas.

Arkas

Verwirrt muß ich gestehn, daß ich nicht weiß,
Wohin ich meinen Argwohn richten soll.
Sind's die Gefangnen, die auf ihre Flucht
1770 Verstohlen sinnen? Ist's die Priesterin,
Die ihnen hilft? Es mehrt sich das Gerücht:
Das Schiff, das diese beiden hergebracht,
Sei irgend noch in einer Bucht versteckt.
Und jenes Mannes Wahnsinn, diese Weihe,
1775 Der heil'ge Vorwand dieser Zögrung, rufen
Den Argwohn lauter und die Vorsicht auf.

Thoas

Es komme schnell die Priesterin herbei!
Dann geht, durchsucht das Ufer scharf und schnell
Vom Vorgebirge bis zum Hain der Göttin.
1780 Verschonet seine heil'gen Tiefen, legt
Bedächt'gen Hinterhalt und greift sie an;
Wo ihr sie findet, faßt sie wie ihr pflegt.

Zweiter Auftritt.

Thoas allein.

Entsetzlich wechselt mir der Grimm im Busen,
Erst gegen sie, die ich so heilig hielt;

1785 Dann gegen mich, der ich sie zum Verrat
Durch Nachsicht und durch Güte bildete.
Zur Sklaverei gewöhnt der Mensch sich gut
Und lernet leicht gehorchen, wenn man ihn
Der Freiheit ganz beraubt. Ja, wäre sie
1790 In meiner Ahnherrn rohe Hand gefallen,
Und hätte sie der heil'ge Grimm verschont,
Sie wäre froh gewesen, sich allein
Zu retten, hätte dankbar ihr Geschick
Erkannt und fremdes Blut vor dem Altar
1795 Vergossen, hätte Pflicht genannt
Was Not war. Nun lockt meine Güte
In ihrer Brust verwegnen Wunsch herauf.
Vergebens hofft' ich, sie mir zu verbinden;
Sie sinnt sich nun ein eigen Schicksal aus.
1800 Durch Schmeichelei gewann sie mir das Herz;
Nun widersteh' ich der, so sucht sie sich
Den Weg durch List und Trug, und meine Güte
Scheint ihr ein alt verjährtes Eigentum.

Dritter Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Thoas.

Iphigenie

Du forderst mich! was bringt dich zu uns her?

Thoas

1805 Du schiebst das Opfer auf, sag' an, warum?

Iphigenie

Ich hab' an Arkas alles klar erzählt.

Thoas

Von dir möcht' ich es weiter noch vernehmen.

Iphigenie

Die Göttin giebt dir Frist zur Überlegung.

Thoas

Sie scheint dir selbst gelegen, diese Frist.

Iphigenie

1810 Wenn dir das Herz zum grausamen Entschluß
Verhärtet ist, so solltest du nicht kommen!
Ein König, der Unmenschliches verlangt,
Find't Diener g'nug, die gegen Gnad' und Lohn
Den halben Fluch der That begierig fassen;
1815 Doch seine Gegenwart bleibt unbefleckt.
Er sinnt den Tod in einer schweren Wolke,
Und seine Boten bringen flammendes
Verderben auf des Armen Haupt hinab;
Er aber schwebt durch seine Höhen ruhig,
1820 Ein unerreichter Gott, im Sturme fort.

Thoas

Die heil'ge Lippe tönt ein wildes Lied.

Iphigenie

Nicht Priesterin! nur Agamemnons Tochter.
Der Unbekannten Wort verehrtest du;
Der Fürstin willst du rasch gebieten? Nein!
1825 Von Jugend auf hab' ich gelernt gehorchen,
Erst meinen Eltern und dann einer Gottheit,
Und folgsam fühlt' ich immer meine Seele

Am schönsten frei; allein dem harten Worte,
Dem rauhen Ausspruch eines Mannes mich
1830 Zu fügen lernt' ich weder dort noch hier.

Thoas

Ein alt Gesetz, nicht ich, gebietet dir.

Iphigenie

Wir fassen ein Gesetz begierig an,
Das unsrer Leidenschaft zur Waffe dient.
Ein andres spricht zu mir, ein älteres,
1835 Mich dir zu widersetzen, das Gebot,
Dem jeder Fremde heilig ist.

Thoas

Es scheinen die Gefangnen dir sehr nah
Am Herzen; denn vor Anteil und Bewegung
Vergissest du der Klugheit erstes Wort,
1840 Daß man den Mächtigen nicht reizen soll.

Iphigenie

Red' oder schweig' ich, immer kannst du wissen,
Was mir im Herzen ist und immer bleibt.
Löst die Erinnerung des gleichen Schicksals
Nicht ein verschloss'nes Herz zum Mitleid auf?
1845 Wie mehr denn meins! In ihnen seh' ich mich.
Ich habe vorm Altare selbst gezittert,
Und feierlich umgab der frühe Tod
Die Knieende; das Messer zuckte schon,
Den lebenvollen Busen zu durchbohren;
1850 Mein Innerstes entsetzte wirbelnd sich,
Mein Auge brach, und — ich fand mich gerettet.

Sind wir, was Götter gnädig uns gewährt,
Unglücklichen nicht zu erstatten schuldig?
Du weißt es, kennst mich, und du willst mich zwingen!

Thoas

1855 Gehorche deinem Dienste, nicht dem Herrn.

Iphigenie

Laß ab! Beschönige nicht die Gewalt,
Die sich der Schwachheit eines Weibes freut.
Ich bin so frei geboren als ein Mann.
Stünd' Agamemnons Sohn dir gegenüber,
1860 Und du verlangtest, was sich nicht gebührt,
So hat auch er ein Schwert und einen Arm,
Die Rechte seines Busens zu verteid'gen.
Ich habe nichts als Worte, und es ziemt
Dem edeln Mann, der Frauen Wort zu achten.

Thoas

1865 Ich acht' es mehr als eines Bruders Schwert.

Iphigenie

Das Los der Waffen wechselt hin und her;
Kein kluger Streiter hält den Feind gering.
Auch ohne Hilfe gegen Trutz und Härte
Hat die Natur den Schwachen nicht gelassen.
1870 Sie gab zur List ihm Freude, lehrt' ihn Künste;
Bald weicht er aus, verspätet und umgeht.
Ja, der Gewaltige verdient, daß man sie übt.

Thoas

Die Vorsicht stellt der List sich klug entgegen.

Iphigenie

Und eine reine Seele braucht sie nicht.

Thoas

1875 Sprich unbehutsam nicht dein eigen Urteil.

Iphigenie

O sähest du wie meine Seele kämpft,
Ein bös Geschick, das sie ergreifen will,
Im ersten Anfall mutig abzutreiben!
So steh' ich denn hier wehrlos gegen dich?
1880 Die schöne Bitte, den anmut'gen Zweig,
In einer Frauen Hand gewaltiger
Als Schwert und Waffe, stößest du zurück:
Was bleibt mir nun, mein Innres zu verteid'gen?
Ruf' ich die Göttin um ein Wunder an?
1885 Ist keine Kraft in meiner Seele Tiefen?

Thoas

Es scheint, der beiden Fremden Schicksal macht
Unmäßig dich besorgt. Wer sind sie? sprich,
Für die dein Geist gewaltig sich erhebt?

Iphigenie

Sie sind — sie scheinen — für Griechen halt' ich sie.

Thoas

1890 Landsleute sind es? und sie haben wohl
Der Rückkehr schönes Bild in dir erneut?

Iphigenie nach einigem Stillschweigen

Hat denn zur unerhörten That der Mann
Allein das Recht? Drückt denn Unmögliches

Nur er an die gewalt'ge Heldenbrust?
1895 Was nennt man groß? Was hebt die Seele schaudernd
Dem immer wiederholenden Erzähler,
Als was mit unwahrscheinlichem Erfolg
Der Mutigste begann? Der in der Nacht
Allein das Heer des Feindes überschleicht,
1900 Wie unversehen eine Flamme wütend
Die Schlafenden, Erwachenden ergreift,
Zuletzt gedrängt von den Ermunterten
Auf Feindes Pferden, doch mit Beute kehrt,
Wird der allein gepriesen? der allein,
1905 Der, einen sichern Weg verachtend, kühn
Gebirg und Wälder durchzustreifen geht,
Daß er von Räubern eine Gegend säubre?
Ist uns nichts übrig? Muß ein zartes Weib
Sich ihres angebornen Rechts entäußern,
1910 Wild gegen Wilde sein, wie Amazonen
Das Recht des Schwerts euch rauben und mit Blute
Die Unterdrückung rächen? Auf und ab
Steigt in der Brust ein kühnes Unternehmen;
Ich werde großem Vorwurf nicht entgehn,
1915 Noch schwerem Übel, wenn es mir mißlingt;
Allein euch leg' ich's auf die Kniee! Wenn
Ihr wahrhaft seid, wie ihr gepriesen werdet,
So zeigt's durch euern Beistand und verherrlicht
Durch mich die Wahrheit! — Ja, vernimm, o König,
1920 Es wird ein heimlicher Betrug geschmiedet;
Vergebens fragst du den Gefangnen nach;
Sie sind hinweg und suchen ihre Freunde,
Die mit dem Schiff am Ufer warten, auf.
Der ältste, den das Übel hier ergriffen

1925 Und nun verlassen hat — es ist Orest,
Mein Bruder, und der andre sein Vertrauter,
Sein Jugendfreund, mit Namen Pylades.
Apoll schickt sie von Delphi diesem Ufer
Mit göttlichen Befehlen zu, das Bild
1930 Dianens wegzurauben und zu ihm
Die Schwester hinzubringen, und dafür
Verspricht er dem von Furien Verfolgten,
Des Mutterblutes Schuldigen, Befreiung.
Uns beide hab' ich nun, die Überbliebnen
1935 Von Tantals Haus, in deine Hand gelegt;
Verdirb uns — wenn du darfst.

Thoas

Du glaubst, es höre
Der rohe Scythe, der Barbar, die Stimme
Der Wahrheit und der Menschlichkeit, die Atreus,
Der Grieche, nicht vernahm?

Iphigenie

Es hört sie jeder,
1940 Geboren unter jedem Himmel, dem
Des Lebens Quelle durch den Busen rein
Und ungehindert fließt. — Was sinnst du mir,
O König, schweigend in der tiefen Seele?
Ist es Verderben? so töte mich zuerst!
1945 Denn nun empfind' ich, da uns keine Rettung
Mehr übrig bleibt, die gräßliche Gefahr,
Worein ich die Geliebten übereilt
Vorsetzlich stürzte. Weh! ich werde sie
Gebunden vor mir sehn! Mit welchen Blicken
1950 Kann ich von meinem Bruder Abschied nehmen,

Den ich ermorde? Nimmer kann ich ihm
Mehr in die vielgeliebten Augen schaun!

Thoas

So haben die Betrüger künstlich-dichtend
Der lang Verschloßnen, ihre Wünsche leicht
1955 Und willig Glaubenden, ein solch Gespinst
Ums Haupt geworfen!

Iphigenie

Nein! o König, nein!
Ich könnte hintergangen werden; diese
Sind treu und wahr. Wirst du sie anders finden,
So laß sie fallen und verstoße mich,
1960 Verbanne mich zur Strafe meiner Thorheit
An einer Klippeninsel traurig Ufer.
Ist aber dieser Mann der lang erflehte,
Geliebte Bruder, so entlaß uns, sei
Auch den Geschwistern wie der Schwester freundlich!
1965 Mein Vater fiel durch seiner Frauen Schuld,
Und sie durch ihren Sohn. Die letzte Hoffnung
Von Atreus' Stamme ruht auf ihm allein.
Laß mich mit reinem Herzen, reiner Hand,
Hinübergehn und unser Haus entsühnen.
1970 Du hältst mir Wort! — Wenn zu den Meinen je
Mir Rückkehr zubereitet wäre, schwurst
Du mich zu lassen; und sie ist es nun.
Ein König sagt nicht, wie gemeine Menschen,
Verlegen zu, daß er den Bittenden
1975 Auf einen Augenblick entferne; noch
Verspricht er auf den Fall, den er nicht hofft;
Dann fühlt er erst die Höhe seiner Würde,
Wenn er den Harrenden beglücken kann.

Thoas

Unwillig, wie sich Feuer gegen Wasser
1980 Im Kampfe wehrt und gischend seinen Feind
Zu tilgen sucht, so wehret sich der Zorn
In meinem Busen gegen deine Worte.

Iphigenie

O laß die Gnade, wie das heil'ge Licht
Der stillen Opferflamme, mir, umkränzt
1985 Von Lobgesang und Dank und Freude, lodern.

Thoas

Wie oft besänftigte mich diese Stimme!

Iphigenie

O reiche mir die Hand zum Friedenszeichen.

Thoas

Du forderst viel in einer kurzen Zeit.

Iphigenie

Um Guts zu thun braucht's keiner Überlegung.

Thoas

1990 Sehr viel! denn auch dem Guten folgt das Übel.

Iphigenie

Der Zweifel ist's, der Gutes böse macht.
Bedenke nicht; gewähre, wie du's fühlst.

Vierter Auftritt.

Orest gewaffnet. Die Vorigen.

Orest nach der Scene gekehrt

Verdoppelt eure Kräfte! Haltet sie
Zurück! nur wenig Augenblicke! Weicht
1995 Der Menge nicht, und deckt den Weg zum Schiffe
Mir und der Schwester.

Zu Iphigenien ohne den König zu sehen.

Komm, wir sind verraten.
Geringer Raum bleibt uns zu Flucht. Geschwind!

Er erblickt den König.

Thoas nach dem Schwerte greifend

In meiner Gegenwart führt ungestraft
Kein Mann das nackte Schwert.

Iphigenie

Entheiliget
2000 Der Göttin Wohnung nicht durch Wut und Mord.
Gebietet euerm Volke Stillstand, höret
Die Priesterin, die Schwester.

Orest

Sage mir!
Wer ist es, der uns droht?

Iphigenie

Verehr' in ihm
Den König, der mein zweiter Vater ward!
2005 Verzeih' mir, Bruder! doch mein kindlich Herz
Hat unser ganz Geschick in seine Hand
Gelegt. Gestanden hab ich euern Anschlag
Und meine Seele vom Verrat gerettet.

Orest

Will er die Rückkehr friedlich uns gewähren?

Iphigenie

2010 Dein blinkend Schwert verbietet mir die Antwort.

Orest der das Schwert einsteckt

So sprich! Du siehst, ich horche deinen Worten.

Fünfter Auftritt.

Die Vorigen. Pylades. Bald nach ihm Arkas.

Beide mit bloßen Schwertern.

Pylades

Verweilet nicht! Die letzten Kräfte raffen
Die Unsrigen zusammen; weichend werden
Sie nach der See langsam zurückgedrängt.
2015 Welch ein Gespräch der Fürsten find' ich hier!
Dies ist des Königes verehrtes Haupt!

Arkas

Gelassen, wie es dir, o König, ziemt,
Stehst du den Feinden gegenüber. Gleich
Ist die Verwegenheit bestraft; es weicht
2020 Und fällt ihr Anhang, und ihr Schiff ist unser.
Ein Wort von dir, so steht's in Flammen.

Thoas

Geh!
Gebiete Stillstand meinem Volke! keiner
Beschädige den Feind, so lang wir reden.

Arkas ab.

Orest

Ich nehm' es an. Geh, sammle, treuer Freund,
2025 Den Rest des Volkes; harret still, welch Ende
Die Götter unsern Thaten zubereiten.

Pylades ab.

Sechster Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Thoas. Orest.

Iphigenie

Befreit von Sorge mich, eh' ihr zu sprechen
Beginnet. Ich befürchte bösen Zwist,
Wenn du, o König, nicht der Billigkeit
2030 Gelinde Stimme hörest; du, mein Bruder,
Der raschen Jugend nicht gebieten willst.

Thoas

Ich halte meinen Zorn, wie es dem Ältern
Geziemt, zurück. Antworte mir! Womit
Bezeugst du, daß du Agamemnons Sohn
2035 Und dieser Bruder bist?

Orest

Hier ist das Schwert,
Mit dem er Troja's tapfre Männer schlug.
Dies nahm ich seinem Mörder ab, und bat
Die Himmlischen, den Mut und Arm, das Glück
Des großen Königes mir zu verleihn,
2040 Und einen schönern Tod mir zu gewähren.
Wähl' einen aus den Edeln deines Heers
Und stelle mir den Besten gegenüber.

So weit die Erde Heldensöhne nährt
Ist keinem Fremdling dies Gesuch verweigert.

Thoas

2045 Dies Vorrecht hat die alte Sitte nie
Dem Fremden hier gestattet.

Orest

So beginne
Die neue Sitte denn von dir und mir!
Nachahmend heiliget ein ganzes Volk
Die edle That der Herrscher zum Gesetz.
2050 Und laß mich nicht allein für unsre Freiheit,
Laß mich, den Fremden für die Fremden, kämpfen.
Fall' ich, so ist ihr Urteil mit dem meinen
Gesprochen, aber gönnet mir das Glück
Zu überwinden, so betrete nie
2055 Ein Mann dies Ufer, dem der schnelle Blick
Hilfreicher Liebe nicht begegnet, und
Getröstet scheide jeglicher hinweg!

Thoas

Nicht unwert scheinest du, o Jüngling, mir
Der Ahnherrn, deren du dich rühmst, zu sein.
2060 Groß ist die Zahl der edeln tapfern Männer,
Die mich begleiten; doch ich stehe selbst
In meinen Jahren noch dem Feinde, bin
Bereit mit dir der Waffen Los zu wagen.

Iphigenie

Mit nichten! Dieses blutigen Beweises
2065 Bedarf es nicht, o König! Laßt die Hand
Vom Schwerte! Denkt an mich und mein Geschick.

Der rasche Kampf verewigt einen Mann;
Er falle gleich, so preiset ihn das Lied.
Allein die Thränen, die unendlichen,
2070 Der überbliebnen, der verlass'nen Frau
Zählt keine Nachwelt, und der Dichter schweigt
Von tausend durchgeweinten Tag- und Nächten,
Wo eine stille Seele den verlornen,
Rasch abgeschiednen Freund vergebens sich
2075 Zurückzurufen bangt und sich verzehrt.
Mich selbst hat eine Sorge gleich gewarnt,
Daß der Betrug nicht eines Räubers mich
Vom sichern Schutzort reiße, mich der Knechtschaft
Verrate. Fleißig hab' ich sie befragt,
2080 Nach jedem Umstand mich erkundigt, Zeichen
Gefordert, und gewiß ist nun mein Herz.
Sieh hier an seiner rechten Hand das Mal
Wie von drei Sternen, das am Tage schon,
Da er geboren ward, sich zeigte, das
2085 Auf schwere That mit dieser Faust zu üben
Der Priester deutete. Dann überzeugt
Mich doppelt diese Schramme, die ihm hier
Die Augenbraune spaltet. Als ein Kind
Ließ ihn Elektra, rasch und unvorsichtig
2090 Nach ihrer Art, aus ihren Armen stürzen.
Er schlug auf einen Dreifuß auf — er ist's —
Soll ich dir noch die Ähnlichkeit des Vaters,
Soll ich das innre Jauchzen meines Herzens
Dir auch als Zeugen der Versicherung nennen?

Thoas

2095 Und hübe deine Rede jeden Zweifel,
Und bändigt' ich den Zorn in meiner Brust,

So würden doch die Waffen zwischen uns
Entscheiden müssen; Frieden seh' ich nicht.
Sie sind gekommen, du bekennest selbst,
2100 Das heil'ge Bild der Göttin mir zu rauben.
Glaubt ihr, ich sehe dies gelassen an?
Der Grieche wendet oft sein lüstern Auge
Den fernen Schätzen der Barbaren zu,
Dem goldnen Felle, Pferden, schönen Töchtern;
2105 Doch führte sie Gewalt und List nicht immer
Mit den erlangten Gütern glücklich heim.

Orest

Das Bild, o König, soll uns nicht entzweien!
Jetzt kennen wir den Irrtum, den ein Gott
Wie einen Schleier um das Haupt uns legte,
2110 Da er den Weg hierher uns wandern hieß.
Um Rat und um Befreiung bat ich ihn
Von dem Geleit der Furien; er sprach:
„Bringst du die Schwester, die an Tauris Ufer
Im Heiligtume wider Willen bleibt,
2115 Nach Griechenland, so löset sich der Fluch."
Wir legten's von Apollens Schwester aus,
Und er gedachte dich! Die strengen Bande
Sind nun gelöst; du bist den Deinen wieder,
Du Heilige, geschenkt. Von dir berührt
2120 War ich geheilt; in deinen Armen faßte
Das Übel mich mit allen seinen Klauen
Zum letztenmal, und schüttelte das Mark
Entsetzlich mir zusammen; dann entfloh's
Wie eine Schlange zu der Höhle. Neu
2125 Genieß' ich nun durch dich das weite Licht
Des Tages. Schön und herrlich zeigt sich mir

Der Göttin Rat. Gleich einem heil'gen Bilde,
Daran der Stadt unwandelbar Geschick
Durch ein geheimes Götterwort gebannt ist,
2130 Nahm sie dich weg, die Schützerin des Hauses,
Bewahrte dich in einer heil'gen Stille
Zum Segen deines Bruders und der Deinen.
Da alle Rettung auf der weiten Erde
Verloren schien, giebst du uns alles wieder.
2135 Laß deine Seele sich zum Frieden wenden,
O König! Hindre nicht, daß sie die Weihe
Des väterlichen Hauses nun vollbringe,
Mich der entsühnten Halle wiedergebe,
Mir auf das Haupt die alte Krone drücke!
2140 Vergilt den Segen, den sie dir gebracht,
Und laß des nähern Rechtes mich genießen!
Gewalt und List, der Männer höchster Ruhm,
Wird durch die Wahrheit dieser hohen Seele
Beschämt, und reines kindliches Vertrauen
2145 Zu einem edeln Manne wird belohnt.

Iphigenie

Denk' an dein Wort, und laß durch diese Rede
Aus einem graden treuen Munde dich
Bewegen! Sieh uns an! Du hast nicht oft
Zu solcher edeln That Gelegenheit.
2150 Versagen kannst du's nicht; gewähr' es bald!

Thoas

So geht!

Iphigenie

Nicht so, mein König! Ohne Segen,
In Widerwillen, scheid' ich nicht von dir.

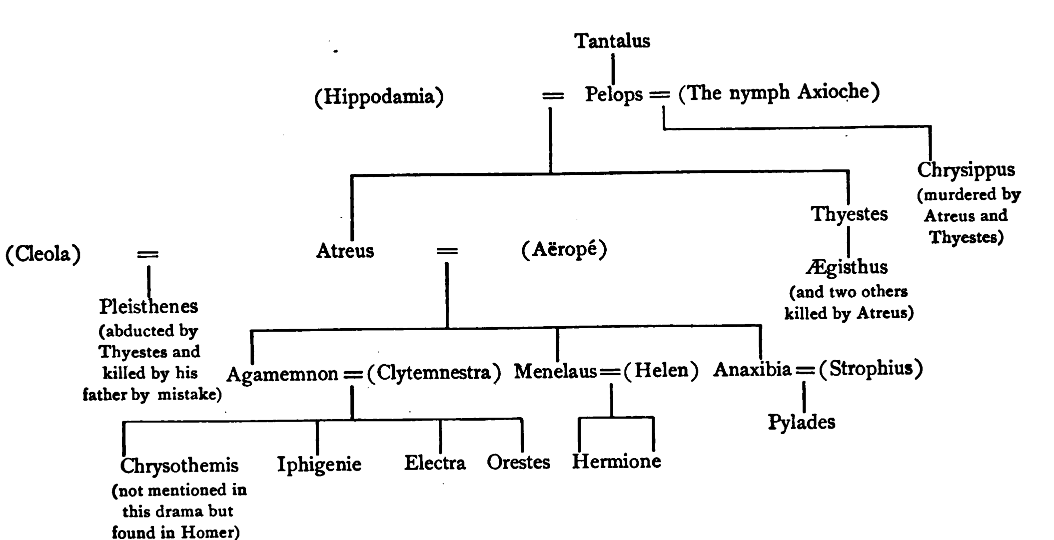
Verbann' uns nicht! Ein freundlich Gastrecht walte
Von dir zu uns: so sind wir nicht auf ewig
2155 Getrennt und abgeschieden. Wert und teuer,
Wie mir mein Vater war, so bist du's mir,
Und dieser Eindruck bleibt in meiner Seele.
Bringt der Geringste deines Volkes je
Den Ton der Stimme mir ins Ohr zurück,
2160 Den ich an euch gewohnt zu hören bin,
Und seh' ich an dem Ärmsten eure Tracht,
Empfangen will ich ihn wie einen Gott,
Ich will ihm selbst ein Lager zubereiten,
Auf einen Stuhl ihn an das Feuer laden,
2165 Uud nur nach dir und deinem Schicksal fragen.
O geben dir die Götter deiner Thaten
Und deiner Milde wohlverdienten Lohn!
Leb' wohl! O wende dich zu uns und gieb
Ein holdes Wort des Abschieds mir zurück!
2170 Dann schwellt der Wind die Segel sanfter an,
Und Thränen fließen lindernder vom Auge
Des Scheidenden. Leb' wohl! und reiche mir
Zum Pfand der alten Freundschaft deine Rechte.

Thoas

Lebt wohl!

NOTES.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE.



(The names of those not descendants of Tantalus are enclosed in parentheses.)

NOTES.

The drama conforms to the classical style in the elevated character of its language, and by observing the three unities of *time*, *place* and *action*. It begins and ends on the same day, the scene does not change, and the action is limited to the steps which lead to the return of the heroine to Greece.

The time is undetermined, but we must place it at least as far back as the ninth century, B.C. The place is the sacred grove in front of the temple of Diana, on a spur of the Chersonese mountain where it descends into the sea.

As to the language it is throughout poetical and of almost uniform elevation. There are a number of words not used in prose, and there are others, found also in prose, which have an unusual significance. To these attention is called in the notes.

The references to the Introduction should be carefully consulted, and the whole Introduction should be read and studied attentively before the book is laid aside.

The descent of the heroine, and of her relatives, can be readily traced by the table on the opposite page.

ACT I. SCENE 1.

Page 3. — lines 1–54. In these fifty-four lines there is not only a vivid portrayal of the personality of Iphigenie, but also an exposition of the situation upon which the unfolding of the drama is based. The life which she leads on the foreign shore is another death to her. Her desire is directed to a return to Greece.

l. 2. heil'gen, *sacred*. This adjective is applied with great regularity to persons and objects dedicated or consecrated to the service of the goddess. Cf. l. 34, note.

ll. 1–6. Construe: Ich trete in eure Schatten wie ich in das Heiligtum der Göttin trete, i.e. mit schaudernдem Gefühl, *with a*

feeling of awe. — heraus, *out from,* i.e. the temple. She is outside when she says these words, not in the act of coming out.

l. 6. The expletive es preceding the finite verb allows this verb to stand at the beginning of the sentence. Mein Geist is the subject.

l. 8. Ein hoher Wille, i.e. *the will of a higher power* (Diana).

l. 11. lange Tage, *through long days.* Note that Tage lang means "for days." Cf. l. 68.

l. 14. herüber, cf. with heraus in l. 1. The hollow sounds come over *from* Greece to her.

l. 16. Ihm zehrt ... Gram, *grief devours every happiness* before it is enjoyed. A remote similarity may be noticed in this simile to the receding water and fruit which Tantalus tried to reach. The personification of Gram by means of the definite article should be noticed. The prose version has: ihn läßt der Gram des schönsten Glückes nicht genießen.

ll. 18–19. Ihm schwärmen ... Hallen. schwärmen, lit., to swarm. — abwärts, here, "away from the direct road." Translate: *His thoughts forever throng away toward the halls of his father.* Max Hoeferer connects the words with the Greek *κατάγεσθαι, to ride downward* or *homeward,* lit., *off*-ward. The idea is clear enough, if we remember that ab is "off," hence "off the straight line."

l. 21. Mitgeborne, *brothers and sisters,* Greek: *σύγγονοι,* Latin: *cognati.* Such words are accurately and easily rendered into equivalent German. — fest und fester, *more and more firmly.* This abbreviation of the first comparative is characteristic of Goethe. Cf. l. 1691, bang und bänger. See Lehmann, *Goethe's Sprache,* § 117.

l. 23. Ich rechte ... nicht; rechten is to argue as before a judge. Translate, *I wage no controversy with the gods.*

l. 24. der Frauen is here the old genitive singular in en.

Page 4. — **line** 30. Schon, *even;* but this word does not exactly give the sense of schon. The passage means: a woman may well be satisfied if she has the duty and consolation of obeying a husband.

l. 31. gar in this line has the force of the English, *to cap the climax.* Translate: *if, to add to her misery,* or, *if, to make her misery complete.* Cf. Paul's *Wörterbuch.* Gar is here nearly the same as vollends.

The condition of woman in Greece was inferior. A similar sentiment is expressed by Sophocles:

"— Yea oftentimes
So look I upon all our womankind
That we are nothing — —
— When we come to marriageable years,
Then we are purchased and bartered far away."
Soph., *Frag.*, l. 517. *Plumptre's Translation.*

Similarly Euripides says:

"χρὴ γὰρ γυναῖκα, κἂν κακῷ δοθῇ πόσει,
στέργειν —" *Andr.*, l. 213, etc.

"For it behooves a woman, even if she be bestowed on a bad husband, to be content" etc.

l. 34. ernsten, heil'gen . . . These words, as the heil'gen in l. 2, are in keeping with the solemn character of the drama. Their use is quite in the Greek style and thus tends to heighten the impression. Translate: *in stern and solemn*, etc. — *stern*, because Iphigenie is a slave — *solemn*, because she is a priestess.

l. 36. Göttin, i.e. Diana.

l. 41. i.e. Agamemnon's. He was king of Mycenæ and the leader of the Greeks against Troy. He is called below, hohen, *exalted*, and göttergleichen, *god-like*. This latter term corresponds to the Greek *ἰσόθεος*, applied to kings and heroes.

l. 42. This line refers to the miraculous escape of Iphigenia in Aulis. See Introd., p. xi.

l. 44. den du . . . ängstigtest, *whom you filled with anguish, by demanding his daughter* (for the sacrifice).

l. 45. Cf. l. 41.

l. 47. umgewandten, lit., subverted; translate *overthrown*.

l. 49. The Wenn of l. 45 goes with this line causing the verb to stand last. — Elektren, accusative of Elektra. The accusative in en of German feminine names was quite common, but not absolutely required. den Sohn, i.e. *Orestes*.

l. 50. . . . die schönen Schätze . . . These words stand here in apposition with the persons named; the comma shows this. But the original prose version and the other two versions have not this comma. We read: „Hast du meine Geschwister, Elektren und Oresten, den Knaben, und unsre Mutter, — ihm zu Hause den schönen Schatz bewahrt, so," etc. Wätzoldt, Morsch and others therefore maintain that

by Schätze are meant the treasures which Agamemnon had left in his palace. This view is apparently confirmed by the similar passage in the Agamemnon of Æschylus.

> “ *γυναῖκα πιστὴν δ' ἐν δόμοις εὕροι μολὼν*
> *οἵανπερ οὖν ἔλειπε, δωμάτων κύνα*
> *ἐσθλὴν ἐκείνῳ, πολεμίαν τοῖς δύσφροσιν,*
> *καὶ τἄλλ' ὁμοίαν πύντα, σημαντήριων.*
> *οὐδὲν διαφθείρασαν ἐν μήκει χρόνου.*”
>
> *Æsch.*, *Agam.*, ll. 589–593.

> “— May he find a faithful wife at home,
> Such as he left her, noble watchdog still
> For him, and hostile to his enemies ;
> — — And like in all things else, who has not broken
> One seal of his in all this length of time.”

It was the custom that the husband, on leaving his home for war should seal up his treasures and thus entrust them to the care of his wife.

Compare also Euripides' *Orestes*, l. 1108.

ACT I. SCENE 2.

Page 5. — **line 54.** **beut,** older and poetical form for **bietet.** Cf. he *bids* you welcome.

l. 59. . . . **kommt . . . naht,** the king (being near) is coming, while the army (being at a distance) is advancing.

l. 61. **willkommnem Opfer.** Iphigenie speaks of a sacrifice that shall be *welcome, acceptable.* The king knows that, in her belief, this would exclude human sacrifice.

Page 6. — **line 76.** The preposition **zu** is used with verbs signifying to transform, appoint, elect and the like. Cf. **Er ist zum Präsidenten erwählt,** *He has been elected president.*

l. 81. Before **Die neuen Schößlinge** repeat the conjunction **da** (= **als**) of l. 79.

l. 84. This foreign, or alien curse was the ill-will of Athena (Minerva) and Hera (Juno), toward Paris and Helen, the favorites of Aphrodite (Venus).

l. 86. **Sie war dahin,** *It was gone,* i.e. **Freude, Gedeihn,** of l. 87. **Das Gedeihn** is literally, thrifty growth. Translate: *The delight, the glad unfolding of my earliest years.* Miss Swanwick translates: “The simple gladness of life's early dawn.”

l. 88. Selbst, *even, when.*

ll. 89–90. frische Lust des Lebens, *fresh joy of existence.*

Page 7. — **line 98.** Vor so viel Jahren, cf. with l. 7, So manches Jahr. It is part of the poetic fiction that the heroine is young, and that her language is Greek, even among a foreign race. So Helen of Troy is always represented as young.

ll. 99–100. Kam Thoas . . . begegnen . . *Thoas met thee* . . . Kam with the infinitive of a neuter verb, as here, is probably a Gallicism, or the poët may have used this form on purpose to convey the idea of kam dir entgegen, *came to meet you.*

l. 104. Stufen, the *steps* of the altar.

l. 106. Frei atmen . . . allein, *Freely to breathe is not all of life.* Miss Swanwick translates: "Freely to breathe alone is not to live." — macht = macht aus, *constitutes.* Allein belongs to Frei atmen, but stands at the end for the rhythm.

l. 108. Gleich einem . . . Grab. Goethe may have had in mind the adventure related in the *Æneid* III, 24–68, at the grave of Polydorus, son of Priamus, who was slain by the King of Thrace, and whose spirit found no rest in the grave until Æneas had performed the funeral rites. Buchheim has the note: "The simile is derived from the belief of the Greeks that the spirits of wicked persons were obliged to hover restlessly round their own graves," but he gives no authority for this view. The Greeks attached great importance to the funeral rites, of which the covering of the corpse with earth was the most essential. Cf. *Antigone* (of Sophocles), ll. 80–81, and 245–257. It is very probable, however, that the poet was influenced by a mediæval belief according to which troubled souls lingered around their graves.

l. 111. P. V. Tage, die man unnütz durchschleicht.

l. 112. grauen, *gray, dreary,* because of the absence of the sun, *awful, dread.*

l. 113. Ufer Lethes, *the shore of Lethe,* the river of forgetfulness (from Λήθη, forgetfulness) in the infernal regions. Cf. also l. 1258.

l. 114. Die Trauerschar der Abgeschiedenen feiert, the mourning host *of departed spirits spends.* Feiern has two meanings: (1) to celebrate; (2) to be idle, abstain from work. The useless passing of time in the lower world appeared to the Greeks an added torment.

l. 116. This line reads in P. V. (A) Meist ist das des Weibes

Schicksal und vor allen meines; B has der Weiber and C eines Weibes.

l. 118. so sehr ich; so is here "however" or, *much as I*...

l. 120 ff. Arcas enumerates here the blessings of the nobly useful life of Iphigenia, charging her with injustice toward herself.

Page 8. — **line 132.** ... eilt er ... voraus? The goddess of victory was represented as having wings and bearing a palm or wreath.

ll. 138–143. Miss Swanwick translates these lines:

> "—Call thyself useless! Thou —
> When from thy being o'er a thousand hearts
> A healing balsam flows? when to a race,
> To whom a god consigned thee, thou dost prove
> A fountain of perpetual happiness?"

l. 142. Cf. ll. 122–124.

l. 144. Das wenige ... Translate, *what little we have done*, etc. Goethe wrote, P. V., Das wenige wird leicht hinweg geschlungen, wenn man wie viel noch überbleibt empfindet.

l. 148. zu stolz nicht achtet, *proudly depreciates*. Arcas blames false modesty. It is as bad to attribute too much value to one's actions as it is to undervalue them.

Page 9. — **line 149.** falschen, *spurious*. — hebt, for erhebt, *extols*.

l. 154. du ängstest, for the regular ängstigst. The former conveys more positively the idea of Angst, *great fear*. *You increase my fear*. Cf. l. 44.

l. 158. ... der Seinen, i.e. of his men, followers, etc.

l. 161. Folger, instead of Nachfolger, *successor*.

l. 164. setzt ... Vorzug, lit., places no preference; translate *sets no value on*.

ll. 167–68. von Weitem ... lenken, *direct from far, by slow degrees and skilfully, a conversation to a definite goal*.

Page 10. — **line 174.** Es ist die schrecklichste ... The wooing of the king, if successful, would deprive her of the hope of return to Greece, hence "it is the *most terrible threat*."

l. 176. ... löst = befreit, *frees*.

l. 180. Und ob ... gleich = obgleich, *although*.

l. 181. Und fühlt es tief, etc. P. V. has „hoch" for tief: D adds „in seiner großen Seele." This constitutes an important addition to the original.

l. 183. **Verdruß und Unmut.** Verdruß is vexation; Unmut, displeasure akin to anger. Translate: *Does he entertain feelings of displeasure and anger?* The P. V. has „unmuthig" in place of both nouns.

ll. 184–87. **Zwar schweigt er auch von dir.** The king is habitually taciturn, hence only **hingeworfne Worte**, *casual words*, have revealed his intention to Arcas.

Page 11. — line 190. Supply und daß before du.

ll. 193–194. **. . . dem Verehrung . . . den Busen bändiget.** The dative is occasionally used in German, though in prose dessen Busen Verehrung . . . bändigt would be the more regular form. Translate: *. . . whose heart* (i.e. passionate desire) *is restrained by the feeling of reverence . . .* Cf. l. 18 where the same form occurs.

l. 198. **Dianen, die entschloss'ne Göttin,** *the resolute goddess.* As the goddess of the chase she is "resolute." She showed this quality when she resented the conduct of Agamemnon at Aulis. Cf. l. 42. She is a virgin, hence willing to protect a virgin, and a goddess, hence bound to protect her priestess.

l. 201. **Ein gewaltsam neues Blut** (for gewaltsames), etc. gewaltsam is here *passionate*, and neues, *youthful. No youthful passion impels*, etc. The P. V. has: „Solch rasche Jünglingsthat herrscht nicht in Thoas Blut." Cf. mit Gewalt, in l. 196; gewaltsam seems to repeat the thought there expressed.

l. 204. **. . . harten Schluß,** *stern decree*, i.e. the renewal of the old custom to sacrifice strangers. — **andern . . . Schluß,** *a different stern resolution*, to wit: the renewal of human sacrifices.

l. 212. The zu after heißen is found frequently in Goethe.

Page 12. — line 217. . . . gutes Wort, supply ein; *to give a kindly word.*

ACT I. SCENE 3.

l. 223. **Fülle,** for Erfüllung, *fulfillment.* However, Fülle may have its literal meaning here, i.e. "abundance" (of the objects of your every pious wish), by metonymy.

ll. 224–25. **Daß, der du . . .** The du of l. 225 would, in prose, stand directly after daß in l. 224. Its position here is made necessary by the meter.

l. 226. **Zufrieden . . . rühmte** . . . *I should be content, if my people would speak well of me* (but they do not; cf. ll. 239–43). This line is not in the P. V.

ll. 228–30. "He is the happiest man, be he a king or a man of low degree, for whom well-being is prepared at home." Miss Swanwick translates: . . . "who has a happy home," which does not quite reproduce the subtle and poetic form of the original. Sophocles says:

> "*Τίς δ'οἶκος ἐν βροτοῖσιν ὠλβίσθη ποτέ,*
> *γυναικὸς ἐσθλῆς χωρίς, ὀγκωθεὶς χλιδῇ;*"
>
> *Soph.*, *Frag.*, l. 679 (Dindorf).

(Literally: What house was ever prosperous without a good wife, although filled with wealth.)

> "What house has ever gained prosperity,
> How swol'n soe'er with pride, without the grace
> Of woman's nobler nature."
>
> *Plumptre's Transl.*

In the *Orestes* of Euripides it is said:

> "*Γάμοι δ'ὅσοις μὲν εὖ καθεστᾶσιν βροτῶν,*
> *μακάριος αἰών.*"
>
> *Orestes*, ll. 602–3.

"Those mortals who are blessed in wedlock have a happy life."

l. 231. **Du nahmest teil** . . . *You sympathized* . . . This line is not in the P. V. This reference to their former relation furnishes an additional ground for the exceptional influence exercised by Iphigenia. The **e** in the termination of **nahmest** is required by the rhythm; it is frequently used in stately language, sermons, epic poetry and the like, but is not otherwise employed. Cf. **bändiget** in l. 194.

Page 13. — line 237. The position of the verb depends on the conjunction **da**, in line 236. — **gerochen**, *avenged*, a relic of the former strong conjugation preserved only in the participle in poetic use.

l. 241. **Unmut**, cf. l. 183. The P. V. has here: „**denn wo nicht Hoffnung ist, da bleibt kein Leben und kein Zutraun.**

l. 242. . . . **sinnt** . . . is absorbed in thought. **Sinnen** is *to muse, to meditate;* it is connected with the imagination rather than with the reasoning faculty, and thus differs from **denken**.

l. 256. **letzten**, that is, in rank; the lowest member of society.

ll. 258–59. das Gesetz gebietet's . . . Not. What does it command? The P. V. makes the answer plainer: „Wir sind hier weder gastfrei noch glimpflich (gentle) gegen die Fremden, das Gesetz verbietet's und die Not. The Greeks were merciless pirates, hence the cruel laws by which the Tauri (and other nations) tried to protect themselves. In l. 260, however, Thoas recognizes *the sacred rite* of hospitality.

Page 14. — line 269. . . . **faßte,** *would seize,* imperfect subjunctive.

l. 275. . . . **zugedacht,** lit., intended, translate: *granted.*

l. 276. Dem Elend zu, *into exile,* that is, the misery of banishment. The folk songs frequently retain this use of Elend in its primitive sense. Elend, O.H.G.: *élilenti,* is, literally, *another* or *foreign land.* It suggested the idea of wretchedness, as of a fugitive who is dependent on strangers in a strange land: the misery of an exile.

l. 280. Und was . . . gedenken, the auch of the preceding line is in force in this also, hence: *Whatever they may intend . . .*

l. 284. Ich möchte . . . sein, *it might be difficult to persuade me.*

l. 286. P. V., Der Segen kommt um deine Wohlthat nicht um meinetwegen.

Page 15. — line 287. . . . **Verruchten,** to "reprobates."

ll. 291–92. Note the respect of Thoas for the will of the goddess.

l. 293. hoffen is followed in prose by auf. The omission is poetical. The genitive was used formerly with hoffen. Pronouns and occasionally nouns, are placed in the accusative after it. Note the distinct promise of the king.

l. 306. Ich bin aus Tantalus' Geschlecht. The additional genitive ending in s or es is omitted for euphony. Cf. Introd., pp. vii and xviii.

l. 307. Iphigenia, in claiming descent from one who was once a favorite of the gods, pronounces **ein großes Wort.** She does this *calmly,* as though she failed to appreciate fully its import. Hence the question of Thoas which calls forth the answer of Iphigenia in which all is stated that is necessary to explain the past history of her race. But her version differs from the commonly received as she says: „Unedel war er nicht und kein Verräter," instead of calling him "treacherous and presumptuous." See l. 319.

l. 309. Hochbegnadigten, *highly favored* (by the gods). Gnade comes from a higher power, Gunst may exist between equals. Gnade is often *grace;* Gunst is always only *favor.*

ll. 312–13. alterfahrnen . . . Gesprächen, conversations containing the wisdom of an experienced man, and rich in meaning and significance. The compounds are quite in the Greek style. — **vielen Sinn verknüpfenden** is a very suggestive expression indicating a combination of wit and philosophy. Miss Swanwick translates: "experienced words with wisdom fraught."

Page 16. — line 318. schwindeln, generally impersonal, *grow dizzy.*

l. 320. Euripides makes his Electra say:

> "*ὡς μὲν λέγουσιν, ὅτι θεοῖς ἄνθρωπος ὢν*
> *κοινῆς τραπέζης ἀξίωμ' ἔχων ἴσον,*
> *ἀκόλαστον ἔσχε γλῶσσαν, αἰσχίστην νόσον.*"
> *Orest.*, ll. 8–10.

> "As they say indeed, because, although being a man, yet having the honor of a table in common with the gods upon equal terms, he possessed an ungovernable tongue, a most disgraceful malady." —
> *Buckley's Translation.*

According to some he betrayed the secrets of the gods, that is, he did not control his tongue.

l. 321. Donnrers (for Donnerers), *Jupiter tonnans.* The by-name takes us back to Homer. Cf. the Greek forms: *ἐριβρεμέτης, ἐρίγδουπος,* (*loud-thundering*) found in Homer as epithets of Zeus.

ll. 320–25. In *Dichtung und Wahrheit* Goethe speaks of his interest, during his earlier years, "in Tantalus, Ixion, Sisyphus, those more audacious members of the race who did not find favor with the new gods." He says: "They probably failed to propitiate the gods by a sufficiently humble behavior, and, by their pride as guests, drew upon themselves the anger of their hosts." (Weimar ed.: Bd. 28, p. 314.) — **Tartarus,** the lowest part of the lower world.

l. 326. . . . Haß. The hatred of the gods constitutes, in our drama, the curse that rests on Tantalus and his descendants. In the *Electra* of Sophocles we are told: "For since Myrtilus sank to rest between the waves, when a fatal and a cruel hand hurled him to destruction out of the golden car, this house was never free from misery and violence." Myrtilus was the son of Mercury. See Introd. p. xxx, and note to l. 336.

l. 328. der Titanen, here perhaps *Titanic.* Tantalus did not be-

long to the race of the Titans who had fought the new dynasty of the gods. Goethe groups them with the Titans only because, as already stated, he looked upon them as having also incurred the enmity of these new gods. Cf. note, ll. 320–25.

l. 332. Rat . . . Geduld. Deliberation, moderation, wisdom, patience, virtues highly prized by the Greeks, were wanting in these descendants, because "a god had welded a brazen band about their brows," thus limiting their understanding. The idea is clear, but the words have been singularly misunderstood. A recent editor, Rhoades, says: "The figure is conceived in the classical spirit and recalls the lines of Horace:

> "Illi robur et aes triplex
> Circa pectus erat —"

in which the thought seems to be of rashness and daring hardihood." The Latin poet uses this figure to express his wonder at the daring and fearless *energy* of the *navigator*. They were girded with strength, — a totally different conception from that in the line before us. The difference between *pectus* and *brow* is, of course, the difference between the organ of feeling and fear, and the organ of intellect. In l. 1810 Iphigenia says to the king: "If your heart is steeled to a cruel determination." And Arcas addresses Iphigenia, "As with iron bonds your soul remains *forged* (= held fast) in the depths of your bosom."

l. 336. Pelops, "the man of the powerful will," grandfather of Agamemnon. He had bribed Myrtilus, the charioteer of King Oenomaus, to help him win the race which gave Hippodamia, the king's daughter, to him as a wife. The king met his death in the race and Pelops reigned after him, but instead of rewarding his agent he flung him into the sea. Myrtilus, dying, cursed him and his race. This is the curse from which, according to Euripides, etc., his descendants suffer. Cf. ll. 320–325.

The story is told by Hyginus, *Fable* 84, and the motive is mentioned in the *Electra* of Euripides.

Page 17. — line 339. Oenomaus Erzeugte, the daughter of Oenomaus. This latter is a four-syllabled word, each vowel belonging to a distinct syllable, with the accent on the second.

l. 342. His name was Chrysippus, which occurs in the P. V. (A, B, C). It is found in Hyginus.

l. 348. Her suicide is mentioned by Hyginus, *Fable* 85.

ll. 351–59. The passage illustrates the law of heredity. Man is not the result of a single generation, but the product of an evolution going on for a long period. Hence, he is happy who, rejoicing in silence, sees himself as the last link of a beautiful chain of ancestors. — **Erst eine Reihe**, etc. The erst, more exactly *not until*, may here be rendered by *only*, but the sense is: "A long line of ancestors, either good or ill, must precede, before that is produced which becomes the terror or the joy of the world."

ll. 359–82. The story here told agrees with what Euripides relates to us in his *Orestes* (ll. 11–16), but contains details which are found in the *Roman Book of Fables* by Hyginus. It is from this source that Goethe has the name of Chrysippus, also of Pleisthenes, the son of Atreus, whom Thyestes abducted and subsequently sent to kill Atreus, his own father. (Hyginus, *Fables*, 86 and 97.) C. Julius Hyginus was a freedman of the Emperor Augustus. He collected a large number of Greek and other legends which he published. He is also the author of a treatise on Astronomy.

Page 18. — **lines 383–85.** The emotion of Thyestes is a feature of the tragedy *Thyestes* by Seneca. Cf. ll. 486 and 513 of this *Thyestes* with l. 1000, etc. After the horrible banquet, the wretched father exclaims: —

> "Quis hic tumultus viscera exagitat mea?
> Quid tremuit intus? Sentio impatiens onus,
> Meumque gemitu non meo pectus gemit."
>
> *Thyestes: Act V*, l. 1000, etc.

ll. 390–91. So wendet . . . Gleise. This is told by Hyginus (*Fab.* Lib. cap: 88) "*Ob id scelus etiam sol currum avertit.*" Euripides also mentions it in his *Iphigenia in Tauris*, ll. 192, etc.

> "*δινευούσαις ἵπποισιν*
> *πτονοῖς· ἀλλάξας δ' ἐξ ἕδρας*
> *ἱερὸν * * ὄμμ' αὐγᾶς*
> *ἅλιος.*"
>
> Cf. *Iph. Taur.*, ll. 736, etc., ed. Nauck.

> "From what atrocious deeds
> Starts the sun back, his sacred eye
> Of brightness, loathing, turned aside?"
>
> *R. Potter's Translation*, ll. 224, etc.

This miracle is also referred to, but in a sceptical spirit in the *Electra* of the same author, l. 763, etc.

Page 19. — line 398. . . . durch welch ein Wunder, *by what a miracle.* The king reasons thus: 'If a curse rests on the entire race, how can such an admirable being as Iphigenia belong to it?' That Iphigenia answers his question by referring to her father as 'the model of a perfect man,' shows the king's question to be only the more pertinent. The hatred of the Olympian gods has produced a race of colossal men swayed by passion, and void of reason (ll. 328–335). But neither Iphigenia, nor her father, nor Orestes resemble these. (See Introd. p. xxxi) The curse, therefore, is simply a traditional element in which the characters believe, — which dwells in their thoughts, but does not affect their destiny (cf. ll. 714–717), or, if a mere sentiment (hatred), it may have weakened in the course of time, and may become extinct at any moment. Cf. l. 1699, note, and text of P. V. there quoted.

l. 402. . . . ersten Zeit, *early youth.*

l. 404. den Erstling, *the first fruit* (cf. firstling).

ll. 406–09. As to the „es" before war, and before mangelte, cf. l. 6, also l. 397.

l. 412. . . . sichern . . . *secure*, in the sense that they felt themselves secure.

l. 416. Trojens, instead of Trojas. The German ending ens with foreign words like this is unusual now. Goethe used it frequently. Cf. l. 49, Elektren: similarly Europens for Europas occurs.

l. 419. Aulis, in Bœotia on the channel of the Ægean sea which separates Bœotia from the island of Eubœa, whence the Grecian host started for the Trojan war. (Cf. *Iliad*, Book I.)

l. 421. see Introd., p. viii.

l. 423. Kalchas, the name of the soothsayer (priest) of the Greeks. He is introduced in Homer (*Iliad*, Book I), but no mention is made of the sacrifice of Iphigenia or of any daughter of Agamemnon of this name.

Page 20. — line 425. Sie rissen, *they dragged* (*snatched*).

l. 426. . . . dieses Haupt, a more poetical term than diesen Kopf, which could not possibly be used here.

l. 428. The story is told by Hyginus, *Fable*, 98–120, also by Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 12. 27.

l. 431. Enkel, for Enkelin, here, *granddaughter.*

l. 432. Der Göttin Eigentum, *the property of the goddess.* Note the climax. The king is reminded that she is no longer free, but belongs to Diana, and hence cannot be his.

l. 442. Schein, *appearance,* as opposed to reality. In P. V. den sie durch den Schein nur strafen wollte.

ll. 445–46. Und ich . . . hätte . . . gefesselt? This subjunctive is very expressive. Iphigenia says in substance: "Here is perhaps a chance for my return home, but what if I should be prevented from availing myself of it, because by disregarding the will of the goddess (nicht achtend) I should chain myself here by accepting your offer?" It is the subjunctive in questions implying doubt, dissent. The P. V. here, l. 445, indeß auf ihre Wege nicht achtend, *not heeding meantime her ways,* or i.e. her possible plan.

l. 447. Ein Zeichen bat ich, for Um ein Zeichen. Omissions of the preposition after a verb occur repeatedly in this poem. Bitten governed originally the accusative of the person and the genitive of the thing. The latter is now replaced by um and the accusative. The accusative of the thing, usually a pronominal object, occurs, and occasionally a noun is used, especially in the Bible and in poetry, as the direct object of the verb.

Page 21. — line 450. versagen, *to say nay, to deny* or *refuse.* These two lines (450–51) have passed into almost proverbial usage. The prose version has: Man spricht vergebens viel, wenn man versagen will.

l. 454. Und sagst du . . . selbst, translate: *And does not your own heart tell you . . .*

ll. 457–58. Die Trauer . . . lispelt, *the voice of mourning whispers.* The article in the German represents the noun as an individual. Impersonations of this kind are of the essence of poetry, and are probably much more readily produced in German than in English. Cf. Milton's "Laughter holding both *his* sides." The verb lispelt, similar to flüstert, is of beautiful suggestiveness; flüstert would be far from producing the same effect. Flüstern may apply to anything, lispeln only to something delicate or sweet, *breathes gently.*

l. 460. This was not a Greek custom on the birth of a child, but wreaths were, of course, used on other festive occasions. The expression is figurative.

l. 461. O, sendetest du, *Oh, if you would send*, a conditional sentence suggesting a wish, but with the conclusion in the following line, *thou wouldest give.*

l. 464. guten Rats, instead of gutes Rats, as was formerly required. Goethe's use of the strong or weak form of the adjective varied. With Mut he always retained the strong form. The P. V. has the same form. The two genitives in s are less agreeable to the ear, and this may be the reason that Goethe finally used the other form almost exclusively.

l. 467. Dahin oder dorthin. The difference between da and dort is in this, that the latter is stronger and more specific. — Translate: *this way or that way.*

l. 468. Wenn ihnen . . . brennt. There is no literal antecedent for ihnen, but the meaning is clear. Translate: *When a passion rises in their heart.*

l. 469. hält vom . . . Band. *No sacred tie will keep them from . . .* Thoas may be supposed to speak with special reference to Helen, wife of Menelaus, who deserted her husband and thus occasioned the Trojan war.

l. 472. . . . die rasche Glut, *the quick emotion*, or *ardor.*

l. 474. Der Überredung goldne Zunge los. The P. V. reads: mit tausend goldnen Zungen die Überredung auf sie los. The adjective golden is often used by Goethe in the general sense of something very excellent. Cf. the Greek *χρύσεος*, golden, which has the same general use with the poets of Greece.

Page 22. — lines 479–80. Doch sollt ich's . . . ging? In prose this would be: Doch hätte ich dies auch erwarten sollen. *But I ought to have expected it, too. Did I not know that I was going to deal with a woman?* The infinitive handeln without zu after ging is unusual but is quite classical.

l. 483. In the P. V. this line is, Daß was du an mir tadelst, sind alle unsere Waffen.

l. 489. Dringst du in mich, *you urge on me. . . .*

l. 496. . . . überbraust, lit. outroars, translate: *drowns* . . . cf. ll. 13–14, der Stürme, in P. V. der Sturm der Leidenschaft.

Page 23. — line 497. . . . wohl, = *I suppose*, expressing irony.

l. 500. An Jovis Tisch: Note the growing bitterness of the king. The refers, of course, to her ancestor, Tantalus.

ll. 501–02. So büß' ich, Thus I atone for = *Thus you make me suffer.* P. V. Ich trage nun die Schuld des Vertrauens zu dir.

l. 503. Ich bin ein Mensch. *I am human,* hence, liable to give way to *anger.*

l. 510. ist, *has been.* The present tense is required when the statement includes the moment when it is made. Cf. Ich kenne ihn (schon) fünf Jahre, *I have known him these five years.*

l. 511. In the P. V. bisher occurs after mich.

l. 516. Die Sinnen, for die Sinne, *the senses.* The form Sinnen occurs frequently since the 17th and 18th centuries, especially when the plural sense is not prominent.

Page 24. — lines 524–25. er dichtet . . . *he imputes to* (by a fiction).

l. 536. Ihr erstes, *Her original* . . . (or *primitive*).

l. 537. Du weißt den Dienst, i.e. you know your office, that is, what it requires you to do. Cf. „Du kennst den Dienst," "You are acquainted with it." The accusative of a noun with wissen is unusual except in certain fixed expressions as Rat wissen, *know what to do.*

ACT I. SCENE 4.

l. 538. Du hast Wolken . . . Cp. l. 428 etc. The version that a cloud enveloped Iphigenia when she was removed from the altar in Aulis is found in Ovid, who says: "Around Iphigenia a dense vapor spreads and removes her from the deadly steel." Ovid., *Metamorphoses,* 12, 27.

The lines of this hymn to the goddess consist of four feet, trochees and dactyls, one line (551) containing only dactyls. The cæsura occurs usually after the second foot, but is far from uniform, and is often wanting (as in l. 542). The mixture of dactyls and trochees gives variety to the rhythm.

The meter of the first six lines is as follows.

l. 538 — ⏑ | — ⏑ | — ⏑ ⏑ | — ⏑ ⏑
l. 539 — ⏑ | — ⏑ ⏑ | — ⏑ ⏑ | — ⏑
l. 540 — ⏑ | — ⏑ ⏑ | — ⏑ ⏑ | — ⏑
l. 541 — ⏑ | — ⏑ | — ⏑ ⏑ | —
l. 542 — ⏑ ⏑ | — ⏑ | — ⏑ ⏑ | — ⏑
l. 543 — ⏑ | — ⏑ ⏑ | — ⏑ ⏑ | — ⏑

In lines 551, 552, 554, 557 a heightened effect is produced by an increase of dactyls.

The general effect is very similar to the chorus in the Greek tragedy, and the entire hymn is well worth careful study in respect to the meter as well as to the poetry of the words.

l. 540. . . . dem ehrnen Geschick . . . The adjective **ehrnen**, *brazen*, is in the Greek style, and corresponds to "inexorable." Critics have discussed the question whether Goethe wished to represent "inexorable fate" as *subject* to the gods, instead of following the Greek view which makes fate the mistress even of the gods: Æschylus speaks of three Fates and makes them identical with the Furies. In his *Prometheus Bound* the chorus asks: —

"Τίς οὖν ἀνάγκης ἐστὶν οἰακοστρόφος;"

Prometheus answers:

"Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' 'Ερινύες."

"Who guides the helm, then, of Necessity?"
Prometheus: "Fates triple formed, Erinyes unforgetting."
Æsch.: Prometheus Bound. Plumptre's Translation.

This view was too well known to Goethe for him to overlook it. The most natural explanation is, probably, that we have here a form of poetic exaggeration. Iphigenia, at the time, believed that she was absolutely doomed by fate. She was rescued, hence, "borne from the arms of inexorable fate." Such poetic uses are not rare. Cf., for instance, **das Unmögliche**, in l. 1510. "I held in my arms the impossible," i.e. that which I never believed to be possible.

Page 25. — line 547. Wie dein Licht. Artemis (Diana) was the goddess of *the moon*, as Apollo was of the sun. Euripides makes his Iphigenia say to Artemis, "As you love your brother, so I love mine."

l. 549. O, enthalte, *O keep from.* In this sense **enthalten** is no longer used in prose. Cf. **sich einer Sache enthalten**, to abstain from.

l. 552. . . . unwilligen. This word has acquired the meaning of "indignant" rather than of "unwilling," but in this passage it has its ancient meaning, "involuntary." Goethe often drops the ending of the first adjective when he uses two, thus making of the former apparently an adverb. Cf. 874, 885. Both should be construed as adjectives.

ll. 554–55. der Menschen verbreitete gute Geschlechter, *the wide-spread, kindly races of men*, recalls Homer's πολυσπερής, *wide-spread Iliad*, II, 804; and his γένος ἀνδρῶν, *race of men*, *Iliad*, XII, 23.

l. 556. fristen, *prolong*. Cp. die Frist, a definite time allowed, during which a work must be done, an obligation paid, etc.

ll. 557–60. "The gods willingly allow mortal man for a while to share with them the delight of beholding their own eternal heaven."

ACT II. SCENE I.

The two strangers of whom the king spoke are *Orestes* and his friend *Pylades*. They both appear fettered. In their conversation before the priestess appears, the hopeful courage of Pylades forms a strong contrast to the despondent resignation of Orestes. The latter steps aside and *Iphigenia* meets Pylades alone.

Page 26. — line 563. . . . Apollen, for Apollo. Cf. 762, also 416.

ll. 567–68. . . . mit hoffnungsreichen . . . Götterworten, *with divine words, full of hope and certainty* . . . Note that hoffnungsreich, instead of hoffnungsvoll, is a word limited to poetry, and is more expressive.

l. 571. Wie leicht wird's mir, *How easy it becomes for me to*, etc. Note the progressive force of wird. Orestes interprets the oracle as meaning that relief shall come to him by death, and the long pain of his family be ended. The expression Götterhand has given rise to doubt as to its exact meaning. If we read the two lines in their natural connection with what precedes we may refer the Götterhand to Apollo; but when we remember that the misfortune of Orestes is the pursuit of the Furies, we can scarcely fail to connect it with the action of the Furies, for it is they who 'press the heart,' who 'stupefy the sense.' Götterhand is simply a "divine hand," and we must not forget that the Furies were divinities dwelling in the depths of Tartarus, dreaded by both gods and men. They are thus described by Æschylus.

l. 574. Atreus' Enkel, here, the descendants of Atreus. Orestes believes that the crime of Atreus in killing his brother's son has brought on him and his descendants the hatred of the gods, a belief which is also found in the Greek tragical writers. In the *Electra* of Euripides we are told:

"Οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεὶς οἶκος ἀθλιώτερος
τῶν Ταντaλείων οὐδ' ἔφυ ποτ' ἐκγόνων."

"There is not, nor ever was a house more wretched than that of the descendants of Tantalus."

ll. 1175–76. *Buckley's Translation.*

l. 576. As only Agamemnon, of all the ancestors, was murdered, the term Ahnen in the plural is a poetical license. Buchheim wants to include Tantalus, but the words „im Jammertode bluten" fit only Agamemnon.

ll. 579–80. These lines refer to the place and manner of the death of his father. — die Netze, which Clytemnestra threw around the King. Cf. ll. 894–96. — im verworfnen Winkel, *ignominious corner*, the murder took place in a remote part of the palace. The term verworfnen is used in a general sense to give greater force to the indignity of the crime. Ægisthus, the murderer, was the son of Thyestes, hence nearly related. According to Homer he accomplished the deed by the aid of twenty youths (*Iliad*, Book IV).

l. 581. . . . ihr Unterird'schen, *ye powers* of the lower world, i.e. *the Furies* by whom Orestes believes himself pursued. (See ll. 1055 and 1148–49, notes.) The Furies or Erinyes, according to superstitious belief, could not be mentioned by their name. Cf. Eurip. *Orestes*, l. 408, etc.

l. 582. The ihr in this line would naturally follow after Die, as is the rule in such relative clauses, except with the pronouns of the third person. It was believed that a parricide left a trail of blood whereby his path was marked for the Furies, who followed him like dogs.

Page 26. — line 584. . . . spürend hetzt, *follow his track, pursue him by the scent.*

l. 588. Kein Tummelplatz . . . Larven, *No tilting ground for spectres.* Orestes' death will end the pursuit.

l. 590. . . . matte Nacht, lit., *faint night.* Everything is faint, unreal, weak in the lower world, even darkness itself.

l. 591. Nur dich, etc. This recalls a similar passage in Schlegel's „Orest und Pylades":

„Nur du, mein treuster Freund, verbitterst mir das Sterben.
Ach warum muß ich dich zugleich mit mir verderben?"

Act III, Sc. 4.

But cf. 592, note.

l. 592. . . . meines Banns . . . *of my exile.* Orestes, Electra and Pylades, according to Euripides in his *Orestes*, had been declared outlaws by the people of Argos. The death sentence, however, was set aside by Apollo. In the same play occurs the following dialogue:

Pylades: My father Strophius, irritated, has driven me from home and exiled me.

Orestes: Does he accuse you of a private crime or of a public crime against the citizens?

Pylades: Because I have accomplished with thee the murder of thy mother, he says I am unclean.

Orestes: Unhappy one! *My troubles must then also overwhelm thee?*

(ὦ τάλας, ἔοικε καὶ σὲ τἀμὰ λυπήσειν κακά.)

Orest., ll. 765–68.

l. 598. Ich sinne noch . . . *I am still devising means* . . . Cf. l. 242, note.

l. 600. . . . aufzuwinden, find the way back, like Theseus, by *winding up* the thread. Ariadne gave to Theseus a thread by which he found his way out of the labyrinth which he had entered to slay the Minotaur.

l. 601. Note the omission of an and cf. l. 447.

l. 606. The rite of sacrifice began with the cutting of a lock from the brow of the victim.

l. 609. Unmut, here, is nearly the same as *despondency*, the negative of Mut. Cf. l. 614 (also 241). The more regular meaning is 'a state of hard feelings,' or 'ill humor,' but it is not quite the same as „üble Laune."

ll. 609–10. By doubting you precipitate the danger. Apoll for Apollo.

Page 28. — line 615. Des Lebens dunkle Decke, *life's dark canopy.* The P. V. has: Mir lag die dunkle Decke des Lebens von Kindheit an schon um das zarte Haupt.

l. 622. drängt ich . . . Schoß. *I nestled with a troubled heart against her knees.*

ll. 623–24. starrte . . . an, *gazed at her.*

l. 628. The emphatic position of the verb is made possible by Es.

l. 632. guten, in the sense of *valiant, capable.*

l. 636. Da er unwillig. Da stands for als which is required in prose. *When he unwillingly*, or, perhaps, with its now regular meaning, *indignantly*. Cf. l. 552, note. The latter meaning may be the proper one here, as Agamemnon was indignant on finding his wife in league with his assassin. — „Orkus," the Latin term for "Hades."

Page 29.—**line 638.** So, *in that case*, is here an adverb of inference.

l. 639. . . . worden, for geworden. The dropping of the prefix is very unusual. The older, and the poetic language preserve the original form of the participle, without ge.

l. 642. leben mag, *care to live.*

l. 644. die freie Stätte, for Freistatt, *asylum.*

l. 645. Da = als, *when.* The force of da is felt with the verbs in ll. 644, 646.

l. 651. Mir . . . spieltest, *played your own joy into my soul;* or *filled, as you played, my soul with delight.* Spielen is here used factitively of that which is caused by the action of the verb.

l. 653. In rascher . . . schwärmte, *carried away with youthful ardor, indulged with you in dreams of ecstasy.*

l. 652. Daß, *so that.*

l. 655. The prose version has here: „Mit deiner Liebe zu mir begann dein Elend." This states the fact more clearly, but less poetically. Translate: *Say* (rather) *my distress began . . .*

l. 656. *That is the distressing part of my destiny . . .*

Page 30. — **lines 662–63.** Pylades answers Orestes desponding statement in the tone of courage and hopefulness.

ll. 664–66. . . . Mut und Lust? Und Lust und Liebe . . . Thaten. Mut und Lust, Lust und Liebe are used in pairs indicating that they are nearly related. Mut is courage of the hopeful kind, hence found in company with the buoyant feeling of joy in action (Lust). (Cf. the phrase „Ich habe Lust es zu thun".) Because of the double shading of Lust, on the one side into "pleasure," on the other into "desire," the word „Liebe" is readily associated with it. — A literal translation being out of the question, we may approximate the lines by rendering: *Am I not, as always, still full of hopeful courage? And hopefulness and love are the pinions of great deeds.*

l. 667. Ich weiß die Zeit, P. V. Ich weiß die Zeit wohl noch: or in prose, Ich erinnere mich der Zeit, *I remember the time.*

ll. 669–72. The imperfects rannten, hofften correspond to our *we were wont to run, to hope.*

l. 670. derejnst, *then, at that time:* dereinst (for dermaleinst = von den malen einmal) has been in vogue since the 18th century, and usually relates to the future, *at some time.* — Brust und Faust, lit: chest and arm; — translate: *resembling our great ancestor in strength of chest and arm.* Cf. l. 328–329.

l. 671. so, translate: *as he did;* dem Ungeheuer, dem Räuber . . . zu jagen, *to pursue the track of the monster as well as of the robber* (as he did).

l. 673. Und dann wir abends, repeat „wenn" cf. l. 668 before „dann".

ll. 675–76. The same „wenn" goes also with these two clauses, as is indicated by the position of the finite verb.

ll. 677–79. The exceeding beauty and aptness of Goethe's similes have often been commented on and admired. In the prose version we read: „Und unsre künft'gen Thaten gingen wie die Sterne unzählig über unsern Häuptern auf," *and our future deeds rose like the stars in countless numbers above our heads.* But this is less accurate than the poetic version, for the stars above us do not properly *rise.* They rise at the edge of the horizon, but they suddenly *appear* overhead as night comes on. Hence the appropriateness of the verb „drangen" (from dringen), *thronged forth.*

Miss Swanwick translates the above lines:

> " Then on a sudden one would seize his sword,
> And future deeds shone round us like the stars
> Which gemmed in countless throngs the vault of night."

l. 680. . . . die Seele dringt, lit: the soul presses on, translate: *is impelled.* Buchheim says dringt stands here for drängt. But he fails to see that dringt is here used in the same sense as drangen in l. 678. The infinitive of a transitive verb used in the present case is not out of place with a neuter verb, any more than it is in the sentence: „Ich komme zu sehen."

Miss Swanwick translates this passage:

> " Endless, my friend, the projects which the soul
> Burns to accomplish. We would every deed

At once perform as grandly as it shows
After long ages, when from land to land
The poetic swelling song hath roll'd it on.
It sounds so lovely what our fathers' did,
When, in the silent evening shade reclined,
We drink it in with music's melting tones,
And what we do is, as their deeds to them,
Toilsome and incomplete."

ll. 685–89. The heroic deeds of the past, as idealized by the poet, were made up of imperfect attempts, like our own. The distant is praised with the Ton der Harfe, i.e. by the poet or minstrel, and appears now beautiful and perfect, because we no longer see the intervals of failure. As to the thought, compare: Unser Leben währet siebenzig Jahre, und wenn es hoch kommt, so sind es achtzig Jahre, und wenn es köstlich gewesen ist, so ist es Mühe und Arbeit gewesen, denn es fähret schnell dahin, als flögen wir davon, Ps. 90, 10. Denn unser Wissen ist Stückwerk, und unser Weissagen ist Stückwerk, 1. Cor., 13, 19.

Page 31. — lines 690–96. "Thus, having our eyes fixed on what always flees before us, we do not heed the path which we ourselves are treading and scarcely note beside us the footprints of our ancestors and the traces of their earthly life. We are forever in the pursuit of their shadow which, like a divine image, crowns, in the far distance, the mountain top on golden clouds."

l. 700. Daß sie . . . gethan. The P. V. has, für das was sie durch dich den Jüngling schon gethan. The gods have done much through Orestes, who, by slaying the usurper Ægisthus, became king in Mycenae. Orestes answers that fame through a deed which leaves remorse is not desirable.

l. 706. erste, letzte, superlatives which here both mean "*highest.*" Translate: "*first and supreme pleasure of life.*"

l. 707. Schlächter, literally *butcher*, and may be so translated, for Orestes sees all the horror of his unnatural deed. The P. V. has: zum Mörder meiner Mutter, zum unerhörten Rächer unerhörter Schandthat.

l. 708. . . . doch verehrten, *whom, after all I revere.*

l. 709. The participial clause denotes an accompanying action, *while avenging infamously an infamous deed.*

l. 710. . . . Wink, *hint*, or *suggestion*, i.e. of the deity, through the oracle. The oracles were generally obscure, affording not much more than a hint, but none the less sacred, so that they imposed a duty upon him who consulted them. Cf. ll. 1021–1024, also Introd., p. xxxi., l. 710 is not contained in P. V.

l. 711. *They haved aimed at it*, i.e. *their intention is to ruin.* Es auf etwas gerichtet haben is, in prose, „es auf etwas abgesehen haben," to be bent on, generally in a bad sense.

ll. 713–14. Die Götter rächen, etc. The thought here expressed, although it was not foreign to some of the more philosophical of Greek thinkers, is essentially modern. "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father." *Ezekiel*, 18, 20. This is also the doctrine of the New Testament. Pylades also affirms: (ll. 715–16) that everyone "takes away his reward with his deed", i.e. that the reward or punishment of a deed is immediate. We call this idea modern, but it was already expressed in ancient times. So in the *Hitopadesa* II, 45 (Müller, M., *Sacred Books*, etc., p. 71). "Through his own deeds man sinks and rises, like one who digs a well, and one who throws up the soil for a wall." Also in the *Dhammapada* I, 1–2. "The pure thought which a man thinks or executes is followed by happiness, like his shadow that never leaves him. The evil thought which a man thinks or executes is followed by pain, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that pulls the cart." (Müller, *Sacred Books*, XI, 3.)

Page 32. — **line** 717. Es erbt . . . Fluch. The thought is more clearly expressed in the P. V.: Segen ist erblich, nicht Fluch.

l. 719. Doch . . . Wille. *Yet at least the will of the high gods.* Pylades believes as firmly in the higher powers as Iphigenia, but the contrast between the views of the two is great. (Cf. l. 1680, etc.)

l. 721. erwarte, for warte ab, *await.*

l. 722. Cf. the oracle as given by Euripides, note to l. 2113

Page 33. — **line** 738. . . . seltsam, *by a strange chance.*

l. 742. Auf . . . lauscht. auf jener Willen belongs to achtend. Translate: *if it does not carefully heed the will of the gods.*

ll. 744–48. A general reference to Hercules, who in a fit of insanity killed his children, was pursued by the Furies, but redeemed himself by the twelve labors imposed on him by Eurystheus. Cf. ll. 632–636, also 2104, note. — büßend, by *expiation.*

l. 759. . . . Bedarf's, *if there is need:* the condition is expressed by the inversion.

Page 34. — lines 762. . . . Ulyssen. For the ending „en" cf. ll. 416 and 563. *Ulysses or Odysseus,* the crafty leader, by whose advice Troy was finally taken, is the man of „überlegter Kühnheit," well-considered or deliberate boldness, of wisdom and of ignoble craft. In the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles he tells his friend Neoptolemus that it is not base to utter a lie, if it will answer the purpose of obtaining deliverance. (l. 109, etc.)

ll. 764–65. . . . *whom he emulates in his ascent to Olympus.* The reflexive verb sich nacharbeiten is of rare use, but quite idiomatic.

ll. 770–71. Von unsern . . . ausgelockt (for „herausgelockt"), *elicited many things by wily inquiry . . .*

l. 777. . . . Amazonen. The belief in a race of warlike women, Amazons, was common among the Greeks. The country of the Amazons was believed to be on the Black Sea opposite to the Crimean peninsula.

l. 781. . . . breite = sich weithin streckende, *far extending.* Note the strong metaphor. The bright realms cannot reach the speaker, because the darkness is so far reaching.

Page 35. — lines 791–92 express Goethe's high estimate of woman. — . . . auf e i n e m Sinn, den sie gefaßt; (she adheres) *to the one resolution which she has taken.*

l. 796. Rückhalt, *reserve.* This statement gives the reason for the mystification as to their real character which the strangers employ.

ACT II. SCENE 2.

l. 801. Euripides makes Iphigenia say at this moment;—

> "Unchain
> The strangers' hands, that, hallowed as they are,
> They may no more be bound."
>
> *Iph. Taur.*, ll. 468–9.

l. 802. . . . wenden ab, *avert,* is here the optative subjunctive, *May the gods avert . . .*

Page 36. — lines 807–08. Laß dir diese Freude versichern, *Let this joy assure you . . .* Cf. Sophocles:—

"ὦ φίλτατον φώνημα. Φεῦ τὸ καὶ λαβεῖν
πρόσφθεγμα τοιοῦδ' ἀνδρὸς ἐν χρόνῳ μακρῷ."

"Oh, dear loved sound! Ah, me! what joy it is
After long years to hear a voice like thine."

Phil., 234, etc. *Plumptre's Transl.*

This is said by the long-forsaken Philoctetes when he is met by Neoptolemus.

l. 810. dein, an early and poetic form for deiner.

l. 811. Der herrlichen Erscheinung . . . *to the glorious apparition* . . . This expression gives us an idea of Iphigenia's personality; at least it adds to the description of her given by Arcas and Thoas.

l. 824. Cf. l. 762, note. There was no King Adrastes of Crete.

ll. 831. . . . des Vaters Kraft, = *our valiant father*, by metonomy. The expression is Homeric: *Iliad* II, 658, 666, — βίην Διομήδεος, *Iliad* V, 781.

Page 37. — line 833. . . . da trennte bald, da = dann, here used to recall the „als" of l. 832, for the purpose of greater distinctness, but note that „als" is a conjunction, da an adverb, as is shown by the position of the verb.

l. 837. gewaltig, implies greater force than mächtig, hence is sometimes nearly "*violent.*"

l. 839. Apoll, der Delphische, *the Delphian Apollo*, so called on account of his splendid temple in *Delphi*. Delphi, a town in Phocis, not far from Mount Parnassus.

l. 845. Es liegt, *It lies*, i.e. in ruins.

l. 856. So groß . . . *However great* . . . Cf. l. 118.

Page 38. — line 863. Achill . . . Freunde. Achilles, noted for his beauty, valor and passionate temper, refused to engage in battle before Troy, because the council of the Grecian princes had made him give up the captive Hippodamia, daughter of Brises, to King Agamemnon. But the death of his friend Patroclus, at the hands of Hector of Tro , made him anxious to revenge his death. He then joined in the fight and slew Hector. Patroclus is spoken of as possessing beautiful eyes, *Iliad*, 23, 66, and as "beautiful in body," by Dares Phrygius. *De Excid, Troj. Hist.*, Cap. XIII.

l. 864. So seid . . . Staub (geworden. *Then those*, lit. ye, *godlike forms have also turned to dust.*)

l. 865. Names of Greek heroes. — Ajax Telamons, *Ajax, the son of Telamon,* (supply Sohn, in imitation of the Greek Αἴας ὁ Τελαμῶνος) was next to Achilles the greatest of the Greek chieftains who fought at Troy, was defeated by Ulysses in a contest for Achilles' armor, and, in madness, put an end to his own life.

l. 866. des Vaterlandes Tag, evidently, the day of returning to their land, like the Homeric *νόστιμον ἦμαρ*; they did not see again the *light* or *sun of their native land.*

l. 868. The ethical dative mir is here very expressive.

l. 869. liebes Herz, *my heart!* Cf. Shakespeare's *Sonnets:* xcv, l. 13.

l. 874. Ein feindlich aufgebrachter Gott, *some hostile and angry god.* Cf. l. 885; also 552.

ll. 880–81. Klytemnestra, wife of Agamemnon: — Ägisthus, her paramour. The ending en (ens), has been explained before., cf. l. 416, note.

Page 39. — **line 887.** nachbarlich, *in the vicinity.*

l. 888. . . . rechne mir's nicht zu, lit., do not charge it to me, translate: *Do not blame me . . .*

l. 889. . . . der erste, for als der erste.

ll. 891–900. This account of the murder is substantially that found in the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus. Cf. note, l. 579, etc., also as in the *Choëphoræ* of the same poet: —

> *Orestes:* Πέδαις δ' ἀχαλκεύτοις ἐθηρεύθης, πάτερ.
> *Electra:* Αἰσχρῶς τε βουλευτοῖσιν ἐν καλύμμασιν.
>
> *Orestes:* In fetters not of brass wast thou snared, father.
> *Elect.:* Yea, basely with that mantle they devised.
> *Æsch., Choëph.* ll. 484–85, *Plumptre's Translation.*
>
> "Ἄπειρον ἀμφίβληστρον, ὥσπερ ἰχθύων
> περιστιχίζω, πλοῦτον εἵματος κακόν,"
> *Æsch. Agam.*, l. 1382–3, etc.
>
> "As round the fish the inextricable net
> Closes, in his rich garment's fatal wealth
> I wrapt him."
> *Milman's Translation.*

Euripides also speaks of the net "in the treacherous meshes of which her father died": "ὀλόμενον δολίοις βρόχων ἕρκεσιν," *Elect.*, ll. 154, etc.

l. 899. . . . verhüllt, *veiled* (by the treacherous garment). According to Æschylus, Clytemnestra committed the murder unassisted.

l. 903. . . . böse Lust, *evil passion.*

Page 40. — **line 906.** The view that Clytemnestra acted from a feeling of revenge is presented by Æschylus in his *Agamemnon* (ll. 212, 217–238), by Euripides in his *Electra* (l. 29) and by Sophocles in his *Electra*, although the latter dwells more on the atrocity of the deed, and less on the motive. It is not correct to say, as Buchheim does, that Sophocles does not acknowledge any extenuating circumstances. These and other words show that she was deeply affected by that deed.

> "— *τῶνδ' ἄρνησις οὐκ ἔνεστί μοι·*
> *ἡ γὰρ Δίκη νιν εἷλεν, οὐκ ἐγὼ μόνη,*
> *ᾗ χρῆν σ'ἀρήγειν, εἰ φρονοῦσ' ἐτύγχανες·*
> *ἐπεὶ πατὴρ οὗτος σός, ὃν θρηνεῖς ἀεί,*
> *τὴν σὴν ὅμαιμον μοῦνος Ἑλλήνων ἔτλη*
> *θῦσαι θεοῖσιν — —"*
>
> *Soph., Electra*, ll. 527 ff.

> "— That deed deny I not,
> For Justice seized him', twas not I alone;
> And thou shouldst aid her, wert thou wise of heart,
> Since this thy father whom thou mournest still,
> Alone of all the Hellenes had the heart
> To sacrifice thy sister to the gods, —"
>
> *Plumptre's Translation.*

l. 909. als eine Gottheit, i.e. *When a goddess* (a divinity).

l. 923. . . . liebes Herz, like l. 869, note.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Page 41. — **line 926,** Iphigenia frees Orestes from his fetters, as she had done before to Pylades.

ll. 927–30. The freedom thus gained means death to the captive. — . . . der letzte lichte Lebensblick, *the last, bright glance of life*, is possibly a reminiscence from Shakespeare:

> "How oft when men are at the point of death
> Have they been merry! which their keepers call
> A lightning before death."
>
> *Romeo and Juliet*, V. 3, ll. 88–90.

l. 933. Cf. with ll. 605–606, note.

l. 934. ... wer es sei, for wer es auch sei, *whoever he may be.*

l. 939. Folgerin, for Nachfolgerin, *successor.* Cf. l. 161.

l. 941. letzte, in the sense of "lowest."

l. 942. streifte (an), *barely touched in passing* ... The slaves were present at certain rites which were performed in the hall, before the statues of the divinities placed in niches.

l. 946. ... von Eltern her, *from childhood.*

Page 42. — line 956. ... stumm empfing. Fate received the king in silence, i.e. did not reveal to him *what was to happen.* The remark of Iphigenia is general, but the application to Agamemnon is evident.

l. 966. ... Frauen. See note, l. 24.

l. 968. *Thus have the descendants of Tantalus with full profligate hands disseminated curse upon curse, and like weeds, shaking their wild heads, and scattering thousandfold seed about them, begotten close related murderers of their children's children, in never-ending reciprocal fury.* The prose version has here: „So haben Tantals Enkel den Fluch gleich einem unvertilgbaren Unkraut mit voller Hand gesät, und jedem ihrer Kinder wieder einen Mörder zur ewigen Wechselwut erzeugt." — Ægisthus was the cousin, Pylades the nephew of Agamemnon; these with Orestes and, in possible prospect, Iphigenia, would seem to justify the graphic illustration.

Page 43. — line 977. ... des Vaters Rächer ... *destined to be the avenger of his father.* Even Iphigenia holds to the belief that the son must avenge his father. She has not a word of censure for her brother, only of welcome, joy and affection. In the P. V. we find: „wie ist des großen Stammes letzte Pflanze, den Mordgesinnten ein aufkeimender, gefährlicher Rächer, wie ist Orest dem Schreckenstag entgangen?"

l. 980. Mit des Avernus Netzen. Avernus stands here as the synonym of death, and Netzen either recalls the net in which Agamemnon found his death, or is a general term for the "snares" of death. Avernus is the name of a lake in the neighborhood of Cumæ, Puteoli and Baiæ, now called Lago d'Averno, whose deadly exhalations were fabled to kill the birds which flew over it. On this account it received the reputation of being near the entrance to the lower world. The poets used the name as a synonym for the lower world.

l. 982. This prayer is incomparable in its beauty and brevity. Her gratitude is so great that it can conceive of no other thank offering than through that which is most grandly beautiful in nature, and itself the source of all beauty.

ll. 985–86. In all primitive conditions the relations of guest and host were important. In travelling to another city or state, the visitor had to rely on some friend with whom he exchanged the courtesies of entertainment. Hence the term. Translate: *by ties of friendship* . . .

ll. 988–90. Euripides has:

> " τὸ δὲ μετ' εὐτυχίαν κακοῦ —
> σθαι θνατοῖς βαρὺς αἰών."
>
> *Iph. Taur.*, ll. 1121–22.

"But to fare ill after prosperity is a heavy life for mortals."

T. A. Buckley's Transl.

The thought occurs often among poets, so with Dante: "No greater pain (there is) than to remember former happiness in misery."

> " — Nessun maggior dolore
> Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
> Nella miseria."
>
> *Inferno*, V., ll. 121–123.

Tennyson paraphrased this in: ". . . a sorrow's crown of sorrow, is remembering happier things."

Page 44. — **line 996.** weder . . . weder, for weder . . . noch. Sie is of course in the accusative.

l. 997. Auch . . . *too*, or *as well.* Auch is here an adverbial conjunction, and denotes that the preceding is admitted to be true. The English language lacks a word corresponding *exactly* to auch. The sense is: "That is true, for she has departed from the land of hope" (= life). Cf. the French "*aussi*" beginning any similar sentence. The P. V. A has Sie ist auch aus dem Lande, etc.

ll. 998–99. Note the double meaning of „Blut."

l. 1000. sinne. Cf. notes to l. 242 and l. 598.

l. 1004. klanglos dumpfe Höhlenreich, another use of a quasi adverb of adjectival force with an adjective. It is the same as „klanglose und dumpfe." Cf. l. 552. The P. V. has: in jene unfruchtbare klanglose Höhlen — — Höhlenreich, lit: the realm of caverns, — the lower

world full of hollow spaces and passages where no sound is heard. This is quite the idea which Homer entertains concerning the world of Hades. In the edition of the Iphigenia of 1787, and as late as 1828, the form given is „Höllen Reich," the realm of Hades.

ll. 1009–10. . . . Strophius . . . Schwäher, Strophius, the brother-in-law (Schwager) of her father. Schwäher, meant originally father-in-law (Schwiegervater) but is now obsolete. In the ensuing account Goethe has followed Sophocles in his *Electra.* Strophius had two wives; the second was Agamemnon's sister, the mother of Pylades. Thus the latter became involved in the act of revenge.

Page 45. — **line 1018.** **Als brächten,** i.e., als ob sie brächten — they came with this pretext.

l. 1019. Orestens, for this genitive cf. l. 24, also 1022.

l. 1022. Elektren, The ending en is familiar in oblique cases of feminine proper nouns, but is not now in regular use with foreign nouns. It is now avoided in elevated discourse.

ll. 1023–30. These lines contain a condensed statement of what is stated at length in the *Electra* of Euripides, and also in the *Electra* of Sophocles. In ll. 1066–92 of the former, Electra urges her brother to the murder of Clytemnestra, after he had slain Ægisthus. Orestes hesitates and says:

"— to kill my mother: impious deed!"

Electra answers:

"What guilt were thine to avenge thy father's death?"
Orestes: "Now pure, my mother's murderer, I should fly."
Elect.: "Will vengeance for thy father be a crime?" etc.

R. Potter's Transl.

In the *Electra* of Sophocles, when Electra hears the words of her mother:

"— my son, my son,
Have pity on thy mother! —"

she cries:

"Thou hadst none
On him, nor on the father that begat him."

And when Clytemnestra again cries:

"Ah, I am smitten —"

Electra exclaims:

"Smite her again,
If thou hast strength for it."
Soph., Elect., ll. 1411–17, *Plumptre's Transl.*

ll. 1025–39. **Stille . . . färbte.** Before oft gewaschnen Boden of l. 1028 supply the definite article den. To make, as some have done, Boden dependent on des of l. 1027, is to attribute to the poet a harshness of which it is safe to say he was incapable. Not infrequently Goethe uses a noun without its article in poetic diction. Cf. l. 1398, kluges Wort, for ein kluges Wort.

There was a mediæval superstition that the blood of a murdered person leaves an indelible stain.

The P. V. has: „wo eine alte leichte Spur von Blut aus denen oft gescheuerten Steinen noch herauszuleuchten schien." In the *Electra* of Euripides, Electra says:

"— — *αἱμα δ'ἔτι πατρὸς κατὰ στέγας*
μέλαν σέσηπεν. — —"

"— and yet my sire's blood 'neath the roofs, a dark clot, festers." *A. S. Way's Transl.*, ll. 318–19.

l. 1032. **Ihr knechtisch elend . . . Leben,** *her life spent like a slave in misery.* The influence of Sophocles is here apparent. "Nay, the best part of life hath passed away from me in hopelessness, and I have no strength left; I, who am pining away without children, — whom no loving champion shields, . . . but, *like some despised alien, I serve* in the halls of my father, clad in this mean garb and standing at a meagre board." *Electra*, l. 185, etc., *R. C. Jebb's Translation.*

The idea is also contained in the *Electra* of Euripides. Electra says of Clytemnestra:

"For mine own mother, Tyndareus' baleful child,
Thrust me from home, for grace to this her spouse."
Way's Transl., ll. 60–61.

l. 1033. **Übermut,** *wanton arrogance.* The word Mut, being identical with English "mood" in its original sense, denotes primarily a state of feeling, then, in particular, courage. In its compounds the original sense is retained, hence Unmut, Demut, Übermut, Anmut

(gracefulness). In the verb vermuten, which gives the noun Vermutung, the original meaning may also be recognized, a feeling rather than knowing of what may be, a "supposition." Cf. Kluge's *Wörterbuch*, Mut.

l. 1035. stiefgewordnen Mutter, one who had virtually become a step-mother, though she was the real mother. stief corresponds to "step" in stepmother, etc.; its use with a verb is here quite exceptional. In the *Choëphoræ*, l. 63, etc., of Æschylus the facts indicated by ll. 1033–35 are summed up, as it were, in the words of Electra: "... and my mother dwells wedded in bloody nuptials to another." The Greek poets uniformly paint the fate of Electra in the darkest colors, on the principle that it is one of the objects of tragedy to awaken *pity*; the other object being to excite *fear* or terror.

l. 1036. hier ... Dolch ihm auf. The "poignard" so frequent in the French classics, particularly Racine, may have suggested the "dagger" to Goethe. No mention of a dagger occurs in the Greek tragedians, still less a "fatal" dagger from older times. Crébillon, in his *Eléctre*, makes this character say: "J'ai vu le fer vengeur." Voltaire introduced the "fatal dagger" in his *Oreste*. No mention of it occurs in the prose versions.

In the *Electra* of Euripides, when Orestes asks his sister:

> "Couldst thou, with him, thy mother bear to kill?"

Electra answers:

> " With the *same axe*, by which my father fell."
>
> *R. Potter's Transl.*, ll. 301–02.

And in the *Iphigenia among the Tauri*, the same author makes Orestes say: —

> "In thy father's house, hung high
> Within thy virgin chamber, *the old spear*
> Of Pelops, which he brandished when he slew
> Œnomaus — "
>
> *Potter's Transl.*, ll. 95, etc.

The idea of fatality, by suggestion of the use of the same instruments, seems to be indicated here.

l. 1040. ... *who live the aay*, poetically for "pass existence." A

Latinism; "vitam vivere" is in Plautus (*Persa*, 3. 1, 18.) — **neu,** in the sense of *renewed, fresh.*

Page 46. — **lines** 1052–53. Wie gärend . . . *as if fermenting.* A strong figure, but expressive. From the blood spilled the grotesque, and horrible specters of madness arise, hence the "Furies." Cf. ll. 1027–28.

l. 1053. The awe-inspiring effect of these few words stands out strongly, because no other words follow in the line. See Introd. pp. xxv–xxvi.

l. 1054. The change to the present tense in the description that follows increases the horror. It is as though all went on before our eyes. der Nacht uralten Töchtern. The expression is used by Æschylus in his *Eumenides*, cf. l. 69: Νυκτὸς παλαιαὶ παῖδες. (For παλαιαὶ, ancient, some read γραῖαι, hoary); he thus characterizes the Furies who with him, however, seem to have been at first identical with the Fates. Cf. the quotation with note to l. 540.

"Fates triple formed, Erinyes unforgetting."

In his *Eumenides* the chorus of Furies also addresses Night as its mother: 'Ω Νὺξ μέλαινα μῆτερ — — *Eum.*, l. 735.

Originally only three, their number became greater as the fable was more fully developed, though occasionally Sophocles speaks of only one. Cf. note to l. 1070. Note the intensive force of ur (uralt, extremely old), as though referring to the origin of time. Cf. Ursprung, origin, Ursprache, original tongue, Ursache, first cause, etc.

l. 1056. geweiht, *consecrated, devoted*, with a sinister meaning.

l. 1057. hohler Blick, *hollow eyes.*

ll. 1057–65. The description here given of the Furies and their movements differs greatly from the Greek conception, but the general effect is very much as in Euripides.

l. 1062. . . . ein Dampf vom Acheron. Acheron is one of the rivers that flow around Hades. It is conceived of as a river of fire by Orestes (ll. 1142–33). The fiery water is rising as a dense vapor, or steam, before the spirit that approaches the lower world.

ll. 1063–65. In seinen Wolkenkreisen . . . The Furies stir in their dark caverns; from the corners, their companions, doubt and remorse, creep up. Before them rises a steam-cloud from Acheron, the river of

death. "*In its cloud-circles the never-ending contemplation of what has been wrought whirls bewildering about the head of the guilty one.*"

l. 1068. ein alter Fluch, *an ancient curse*, that is, the judgment of the Olympian gods, against whom the Furies had sided. They were banished because they belonged to the race of older deities and therefore sympathized with the Titans; but as they did not oppose the new gods, they were allowed to continue their special work as avenging deities.

l. 1070. Sie . . . Rast. The feet of the Furies are "quick" and "brazen," therefore it is impossible for the guilty to escape them. If they give him a respite (Rast), it is in order to terrify him anew. See l. 1129, note.

> "*ἥξει καὶ πολύπους καὶ πολύχειρ*
> *ἁ δεινοῖς κρυπτομένα λόχοις χαλκόπους Ἐρινύς.*"
>
> *Soph., Electra*, ll. 489–490.

> "And She shall also come,
> Dread form, with many a foot, and many a hand,
> Erinys shod with brass,
> Who lieth still in ambush terrible —" *Plumptre's Transl.*

Page 47. — lines 1078–80. Ein lügenhaft . . . Füße, *Let a stranger, ingenious and accustomed to cunning, weave a web of falsehoods as a snare for the feet of another stranger* . . . zur Falle, cf. der Fall, and die Falle, i.e. that which makes fall, hence, entraps. In the *Prometheus* of Æschylus a somewhat similar thought occurs:

> "*λέξω τορῶς σοι πᾶν, ὅπερ χρῄζεις μαθεῖν,*
> *οὐκ ἐμπλέκων αἰνίγματ', ἀλλ' ἁπλῷ λόγῳ,*
> *ὥσπερ δίκαιον πρὸς φίλους οἴγειν στόμα.*'
>
> *Æschylus Prom.*: l. 609, etc.

> "I will say plainly all thou seek'st to know,
> Not in dark *tangled riddles*, but *plain speech*
> *As it is meet* that *friend* to *friend* should speak."
>
> *Plumptre's Transl.*

l. 1089. Let my inanimate body fall headlong (stürze). This accords with the answer of the priestess in the *Iphigenia* of Euripides, when Orestes had asked her what resting place after death he should have, "A sacred fire inside (i.e. the temple), *and a rocky chasm*."

ll. 1094–96. The impersonation of Erfüllung, *fulfillment*, is very

poetic. Pindar had represented *Fortuna* as the daughter of Ζεὺς Σωτήρ, Zeus, the Preserver, or Deliverer. This may have suggested this line.

Page 48.—**lines 1103–4.** ... an gesparten ... Geschenken, *by your gifts, withheld, but long and wisely prepared.* The gods do not grant at once what we pray for; they hold back their gifts and bestow them only when the moment is most opportune, for they alone know what may be of benefit to us (was uns frommen kann). This, of course, is a Christian rather than a pagan idea of deity. The P. V. has: so erkennt man die Götter an lang bereiteten, lang aufgesparten Gaben, denn ihre Weisheit sieht allein die Zukunft, die jedes Abends gestirnte Hülle den Menschen zudeckt.

l. 1107. Wenn, for während, *whilst.*

ll. 1107–8. jedes Abends Stern- und Nebelhülle ... verdeckt, *whilst the veil of stars and mist of every evening hides from us the view.* A high conception of deity, but one not out of keeping with the advanced thought in Greece at the time of Euripides.

ll. 1110–14. The thought of ll. 1103–4 appears here under another form. The gods calmly hear our petitions by which we childishly implore them to hasten their gifts; but "*their hands never pluck the golden fruits of heaven while they are yet immature, and woe to him who, persisting with impatient haste, finds death in the eating of the unripened fruit.*

l. 1115–16. ... wie den Schatten ... Freundes, *like the shadow of a departed friend.* This is more poetical than the prose version: „Wie das Gespenst eines geschiedenen Geliebten." The apparition of the departed is described by Homer and by Virgil as eluding every attempt of the living to touch or embrace it.

Page 49. — **line 1124.** Verhülltest, note the position indicating a conditional. *Even if you should envelop,* etc.

l. 1126. der immer Wachen, *of the ever wakeful,* in P. V., der Furien.

l. 1129. Sie dürfen, *they may* (they are permitted).— ehrnen, *brazen,* recalls the χαλκόπους Ἐρινύς, the "Erinys with brazen feet" of Sophocles. See quotation, note to l. 1070.

l. 1132. Ihr gräßliches Gelächter. Laughter here implies malice. The expression would suit a mediæval demon, but not the ferocious, but always terribly *serious* avengers of unnatural deeds as the Greeks

represented the Furies. However, Orestes is only describing the horrible vagaries of his tormented mind.

l. 1136. . . . die Schlangenhäupter schüttelnd. In the *Libation Pourers* (*Choëphoroi*, 1037, etc.) Æschylus makes Orestes exclaim: "Ah! Ah! ye handmaids: see, like Gorgons these, Dark-robed, and all their tresses hang entwined with many serpents." *Plumptre's Transl.*

In the *Orestes* of Euripides Orestes imagines that he sees the Furies and cries out:

> "Ὦ μῆτερ, ἱκετεύω σε, μὴ 'πίσειέ μοι
> τὰς αἱματωποὺς καὶ δρακοντώδεις κόρας·
> αὗται γὰρ αὗται πλησίον θρώσκουσί μου."
>
> ll. 255–47.

> "Ah mother! Do not set thy Furies on me.
> See, how their fiery eye-balls glare in blood,
> And wreathing snakes hiss in their horrid hair!
> There, there, they stand ready to leap upon me!"
>
> *Plumptre's Transl.*

Page 50. — lines 1148–49. . . . gesellе dich . . . Erinnyen, (pron: E-rin'-ni-en), *do not also join the Furies.* This recalls the language of Orestes in Euripides. Orestes sees in his sister one of the Furies, while she is trying to keep her raving brother on his couch:

> "Μέθες· μί' οὖσα τῶν ἐμῶν Ἐρινύων,
> μέσον μ' ὀχμάζεις, ὡς βάλῃς ἐς Τάρταρον."
>
> *Orestes.*, ll. 264, etc.

> "Loose me. Thou art one of my Furies, and seizest me by the middle that thou mayest hurl me into Tartarus."
>
> *Buckley's Transl.*

The name Erinys is possibly related in meaning with the Arcadian ἐρινύω, *I am angry.* (Cf. *Pausanias*, viii, 25.) At Athens they were called σεμναὶ θεαί, *the revered goddesses.* They are represented as staying in the lower world whither they were banished by the Olympian gods (Jupiter, etc.), but as not hostile to the latter. As to the change of their name into *Eumenides*, the *benevolent*, see Introd. p. x:

In Mueller's treatise on the *Eumenides* (mentioned by Plumptre in his translation of Æschylus, p. lviii, in a note), "the Erinyes are interpreted as the personification of the passionate impulses of righteous

wrath, which first burst out in *curses*, then work in acts of *vengeance*, then are tempered down into moral *indignation* against evil."

As a personification of curses they are mentioned in Æschylus:

> "Πεύσει τὰ πάντα συντόμως, Διὸς κόρη,
> Ἡμεῖς γάρ ἐσμεν Νυκτὸς αἰανῆς τέκνα·
> Ἀραὶ δ' ἐν οἴκοις γῆς ὕπαι κεκλήμεθα."
>
> *Eum.*, ll. 393, etc.

> "Daughter of Zeus, thou shalt learn all in brief;
> Children are we of everlasting night.
> At home, beneath the earth, *they call us curses*."
>
> *Plumptre's Transl.*

Homer speaks of them as distinct beings who inhabit Erebus, where they rest until some curse pronounced upon a criminal calls them into life and activity. The foundation of the myth is probably the belief that a parent's curse takes away all peace of mind, destroys family happiness, and prevents the culprit from being blessed with children.

ll. 1149–50. sie blasen schadenfroh . . . Seele, *they blow the ashes maliciously from my soul*, i.e. so that the fire there burning may not be quenched.

l. 1154. Hölle introduces here a mediæval rather than a classical conception. Höllenschwefel, probably a biblical reminiscence, *purposely fed on the sulphur of hell.*

l. 1156. Rauchwerk (some editions have Räuchwerk). It is a poetical word used instead of Räucherwerk, *incense*, which would be intolerably prosaic.

l. 1159. vernehmen, here the same as *listen.*

l. 1160. das Geleit, *the escort.* — Schreckensgötter, i.e. *the Furies.*

l. 1162. der gräßlichen Gorgone. In his *Theogenia*, Hesiod speaks of three Gorgons, Stheno, Euryale and Medusa. The latter is the monster killed by Perseus. Her face was originally beautiful, but the wrath of Athena changed her hair into serpents, and gave her face such a terrible expression that all who looked on her were turned into stone. Athena placed her head in her shield (the Ægis), and struck with terror all her enemies who beheld it. Homer and the later poets mention only one Gorgon.

ll. 1164–66. O wenn . . . rufen. Iphigenia does not argue against the cause of the suffering of Orestes, but she puts against the terrible

influences that cause his suffering her own, a pure sister's, word of blessing. If the former calls him down to Hades, her own words may call helpful gods from Olympus. **Dumpfen** may be rendered by *hollow*.

We must suppose that in the course of the conversation Orestes becomes more and more impressed by the personality of his sister, who may recall to him, both in voice and form, his mother. The overwhelming terror that now seizes him seems to prove this.

l. 1168. Es ruft! es ruft! . . . Verderben? The es has given rise to much discussion. What is its antecedent? Strictly construed it is der reinen Schwester Segenswort. But this has been objected to as not making sense with the sequel, and „Mutterblutes" has been proposed to be the real antecedent. But a genitive would hardly suggest the es. It would have been exceedingly easy for the poet to substitute Sie to agree with Stimme. Buchheim thinks es ruft means "the voice of the Furies calls," and in order to establish this he assumes that es ruft stands impersonally, like the Latin *clamatum est, there is a cry*. In this case the stress of meaning is upon es ruft! *That peal! That peal!* Something recalls the vanished terror. In lines 1168–71 Orestes says: "Then you wish my ruin? Is a goddess of revenge concealed in you? Who are you whose voice horribly stirs my inmost soul to its very depths?" Orestes *recognizes* that Iphigenia has uttered the words that affect him so strongly. In the editor's view there is no reason why we should depart from the natural connection, making es stand for Segenswort. It is evident that Orestes is yielding to a new frenzy. He mistakes the caresses of his sister—he suspects in her a goddess of revenge; his inmost soul is stirred to its depth by her voice. All that is sweet and soothing appears to him in its opposite form. Why should it be different with the word of blessing from his sister? But there is a confusion in his mind; he hears her voice, only it is for him not *hers* but his *mother's*, hence his terror. This is shown in the lines 1169-70.

Page 51. — line 1172. Es zeigt sich . . . an. *In your inmost heart it is revealed.* There may be here a trace of the influence of Voltaire's *Oreste*. In this Electra says: "Whence is it that, while speaking with you, my whole heart is changed?" (*Oreste*, IV, 6.)

ll. 1176–77. Wie von Kreusas . . . fort. Creusa was the daughter of Creon, King of Corinth, and the bride of Jason who had forsaken Medea on her account. In order to avenge herself Medea made her a

present of a bridal garment which, when she put it on, burst out in flames, burning her, and also, as it spread, the building in which she was. Zündet sich . . . von mir fort, *an inextinguishable fire spreads from me.*

l. 1178. Hercules had received from his innocent wife, Deianira, a garment which she had moistened, as a charm to retain his affection, with the blood of the centaur Nessus, whom Hercules had killed with a poisoned arrow. But the blood proved a terrible poison; in torment he placed himself upon a funeral pile which he had himself erected on Mount Oeta, and perished in the flames, hence the term "Nessus" garment.

l. 1179. in mich verschlossen, *without uttering a complaint.*

l. 1184. ein Rad, . . . *a wheel of joy and pain revolves,* etc., indicating the alternations of joy and pain. Sophocles has, with a different meaning:

> " 'Αλλ' οὑμὸς ἀεὶ πότμος ἐν πυκνῷ θεοῦ
> τροχῷ κυκλεῖται καὶ μεταλλάσσει φύσιν "
>
> *Campbell's edition*, l. 78.

(Literally: "My life is continually turned about on the rapid wheel of a god, always changing.")

> " In many a turning of the *wheel* of God,
> My fate *revolves* and changes all its mood."
>
> *Fragm.*, 713, *Plumptre's Transl.*

ll. 1185–87. von dem fremden Manne . . . Bruder, *an inward shudder makes me withdraw from the stranger* (*Pylades*), *but my inmost heart is powerfully drawn toward my brother.*

Voltaire's *Electre* says:

> " La nature nous parle, et perce ce mystère;
> Ne lui résistez pas: oui, vous êtes mon frère,
> Vous l'êtes, je vous vois, etc."

Goethe studied Voltaire closely and is known to have translated two of his dramas, hence it is very possible that there is a reminiscence of this passage in the words of Iphigenia. But how original Goethe nevertheless is, the most superficial comparison will show it.

l. 1188. Lyäens, *Lyaeus,* one of the appellations of Bacchus. The worship of this god consisted of orgies and revelries.

Page 52. — **line 1192.** der Seligkeit, dative after sich öffnet; dem Liebsten is the dative which complements the object das Haupt, transl.

brow. Haupt is a nobler word than Kopf, which could not be used here. The distinction is lost in the translation.

l. 1195. zu fassen, like zu küssen, depends on Seligkeit.

l. 1197. vom Parnaß die ew'ge Quelle. Mount Parnassus is a short distance north of Delphi. From it descends the Castalian spring which was sacred to Apollo and the Muses.

l. 1198. gold'ne Thal, *beautiful valley.* The term golden, as has been said before, is of frequent figurative use with Goethe, who, in this, follows the Greek poets.

l. 1199. wallend, this verb denotes a somewhat stately or solemn movement, and is therefore appropriate to poetry. It is rarely used in prose. Wie is here used for als, *than.*

l. 1200. ein selig Meer, *a sea of bliss.* Goethe frequently omits the inflection of neuter adjectives in the nominative and accusative.

ll. 1201–5. Orestes persists in mistaking the words and action of his sister. The priestesses of Diana were pledged to vows of chastity.

l. 1207. das schöne Glück, i.e. *the happiness of love.*

l. 1211. Weis' ihn zurecht, *direct him,* i.e. to the right path.

l. 1213. Schilt, *censure as.*

l. 1214. unbesonnene . . . Lust, *thoughtless, culpable passion.*

l. 1215. O nehmt, i.e. ihr Götter nehmt. This „ihr Götter" is not in the prose version, but was inserted in the poetical version, B.

Page 53. — line 1217. dreifach, *thrice* a conventional, poetic form, with intensive force. Its use occurs in Homer and Virgil.

ll. 1217–22. The impressive brevity of the statement should be noticed.

l. 1221. dargestellt, *presented.* In this connection the word is used only poetically.

l. 1223. Unselige, *wretched one.* The word is much stronger than Unglückliche.

l. 1226. To facilitate translation an und may be inserted after gehe.

l. 1229. hergebrachte Sitte, *a traditional custom.* The fierce irony of the desperate man may be noticed. "Fratricide is an ancient custom of our race." Ægisthus, who killed Agamemnon, was the cousin of the latter. The only real fratricide occurred when Thyestes and Atreus killed their half-brother Chrysippus, an event mentioned in the recital of *Iphigenia*, ll. 344–345. (Hyginus, *Fables*).

l. 1232. laß dir raten, *be advised*, or, *let me advise you.*

l. 1235. sich in this line goes with Bekämpfend in the next. Schwefelpfuhl, *sulphurous pool.*

l. 1239. Laß ab, *desist.*

l. 1240. The evident resemblance of Iphigenia to her mother intensifies the horror, as appears from the words „mit solchen Blicken."

l. 1242. geschwungner, *uplifted;* schwingen, *to raise rapidly with the intention of letting fall.* It has also the meaning of the English, *to swing.*

l. 1243. Tritt auf . . . *stand forth*, indignant spirit. The words express a somewhat solemn charge.

l. 1244. tretet an . . . *approach.* Im Kreis geschlossen, *formed in a circle, in serried order.* In his *Eumenides* Æschylus represents the Furies as surrounding Orestes in the temple of Apollo. They are asleep on chairs while he stands on the central stone of the temple. When he leaves, the ghost of his mother rises from the ground and stirs up the sleeping avengers, who range themselves about her. Cf. note *Eumenides*, l. 1359, etc.

Page 54. — line 1249. Weine nicht! Du hast nicht schuld, *Do not weep, you are not to blame.* In prose: du bist nicht schuld. Du hast . . . is a gallicism.

ll. 1250–51. nichts, *no one.* The comprehensive negation expressed by the neuter nichts is felt in German to have a much finer effect than the definite niemand.

The tone of deep tenderness shows the effect of Iphigenia's beautiful character and noble personality on her brother, and marks one of the steps towards his recovery.

l. 1253. eröffne, for öffne.

l. 1255. Allein zu tragen. In the scene of the *Orestes* of Euripides, in which Electra in vain tries to soothe her brother during a terrible attack of the Furies, she says at last: "Oh, I unhappy one! What help shall I invoke, since a divinity is hostile to us." ll. 273–274, *T. A. Buckley's transl.*

ACT III. SCENE 2.

ll. 1258–1309. The idea of the imaginary descent of Orestes into Hades probably comes from Voltaire's *Oreste*, either in the original form,

or in Gotter's German imitation, but it has this distinguishing feature, apart from the language, that, in Goethe the vision is soothing, while in Voltaire-Gotter it is revolting and terrible.

l. 1258. **Noch einen!** *One more* — as though he had already a cup from the river of forgetfulness (Lethe) which to him, in his fevered condition, is a "cup of refreshment." "Pocula Lethes" we find in Ovid. (*Ex. Pont.* 2, 4, 23.) He has also "da mihi habetantem pectora Lethen." (*Ex. Pont.* 4, 1, 17.)

l. 1260. **Bald ist . . . hinweggespült.** *The paroxysm of life will soon be washed away.* To him life, with its tortures, appears a paroxysm, a disease, which the river of forgetfulness will "wash away." The idea is carried out in the sequel.

l. 1261. Translate the present „fließet" by the future. The old Germanic present was also a future tense, and it retains this use at the present day. Cp. Morgen reise ich ab, *To-morrow I shall leave.*

l. 1264. **Gefällig** has been claimed to have here the meaning of *be pleased to.* But in the P. V. we read: „In eurer Stille labt gefällige Ruhe den umgetriebenen Sohn der Erde." We conclude, therefore, that gefällig is here the same as "pleasantly" and qualifies laben.

l. 1265. **umgetriebenen,** lit. *driven about* or *tossed about.* Common prose requires the particle her after um, i.e. umhergetriebenen.

l. 1267. **Geräusch,** *murmur.*

Page 55. — **line** 1276. **schlüpfen,** *glide, move.*

l. 1281. A different meter begins here. (See Introd. p. lv ff.) The student will notice the prominence of the amphibrachs ⏑ — ⏑ in the beginning of the lines. They are followed by dactyls or trochees. If we call the first short syllable Auftakt, as some do, we get trochees instead of amphibrachs.

l. 1288. **der Feindschaft los.** The original genitive after los sein was still common in the 18th century. The accusative is now used.

ll. 1292–93. **darf . . .,** *may venture.*

l. 1297. **Losung** = Losungswort, *countersign, password.* The second prose version (C) has: Heißt ihn willkommen! Auf Erden war's in unserm Haus ein Gruß zum Tod." The poetic version (B) has: „Auf Erden war in unserm Haus der Willkomm — Tod."

l. 1299. **jenseits der Nacht,** *beyond the gloom,* as though night separated the two worlds.

Page 56. — **line 1301.** . . . zum Alten, i.e. Tantalus. Cf. ll. 320-325 and Introd. p. vii.

ll. 1308–09. *forged upon the heroic breast cruel torments with brazen chains.* The description would fit Prometheus rather than Tantalus. Note the poetical use of "torments," as though they were embodied objects. Tantalus is mentioned by Gotter, not by Voltaire, in the sense to which reference has been made.

ACT III. SCENE 3.

ll. 1310–11. Orestes, still fancying himself in the lower world, welcomes Iphigenia and remembers his other sister: Wohl Schwester dir! *Hail* or *welcome to thee, my sister.*

ll. 1312–13. Mit sanften Pfeilen. The cause of a sudden and gentle death was attributed to Apollo, the archer. Inasmuch as Diana is the "divine huntress" the belief was modified, so that the death of men was attributed to Apollo, and of women to Diana.

The term "gentle arrow" is Homeric (*ἀγανοῖς βελέεσσιν*). (*Od.:* xi, 172–3.) "*ἡ δολιχὴ νοῦσος; ἢ Ἄρτεμις ἰοχέαιρα οἷς ἀγανοῖς βελέεσσιν ἐποιχομένη κατέπεφνεν;*" "was it a slow disease, or did Artemis, the archer, slay thee with the visitation of her *gentle shafts?*" (*Butcher and Lang's Trans.*)

l. 1314. Dich, armer Freund, of course Pylades, whom he imagines to have shared his fate.

l. 1315. Komm mit! komm mit! He addresses each one in turn. The P. V. has: Kommt mit! Kommt mit! The alteration may be due to Herder, who wished to avoid the repetition of the „t."

l. 1321. This prayer may be compared with that of the Iphigenia of Euripides. The latter is decidedly inferior in thought, if not poetically.

> "— — *ὦ Λητοῦς κόρη,*
> *σῶσόν με, τὴν σὴν ἱερίαν, πρὸς Ἑλλάδα*
> *ἐκ βαρβάρου γῆς, καὶ κλοπαῖς σύγγνωθ' ἐμαῖς.*
> *φιλεῖς δὲ καὶ σὺ σὸν κασίγνητον, θεά·*
> *φιλεῖν δὲ κἀμὲ τοὺς ὁμαίμονας δόκει.*"

"O daughter of Latona, (i.e. Artemis, the daughter of Jupiter and Latona) bring me, thy priestess, safely from this foreign shore to Greece, and grant forgiveness for my fraud. As you love your brother (i.e.

Apollo) so I, believe me, love my kindred too." (Euripides, *Iphigenia among the Tauri*, l. 1398, etc.) — ... Du liebst ... still. "Diana, you love your beautiful brother above everything that earth and heaven offer, and you turn your virgin face in silent longing toward his everlasting light." Prof. Buchheim says in this connection: "In accordance with a highly poetical notion the *paleness of the moon* is here represented as expressive of *her constant longing* for the eternal light of the sun." *But there is not a word said of paleness*," and such sentimentality is not in the style of Goethe. Professor Wätzoldt says much more justly: "Goethe drew a *motif* for a new and beautiful mythical image from our modern knowledge of the true relation between the moon and the sun which was unknown to the ancients."

Page 57. — **line** 1327. Da, for als, as frequently in this drama.

l. 1337. Raffe dich zusammen, *make a supreme effort.*

l. 1340. Eine günst'ge Parze, *a kindly fate*, who, at the birth of a child, spins the thread of its life. The Greek term is mœra (*Μοῖρα*, from *μείρομαι, to allot*). There were three Parcæ: Nona, Decuma and Morta, in Latin. Their Greek names were Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos. (Hyginus' *Fables*, l. 171.)

ll. 1341–42. Laß mich ... This passage indicates the healing of Orestes. He feels this has been the last attack. Why? Because it dawns upon him that in the company of such a sister as Iphigenia he will be safe, and that his hope of recovery in Tauris was not vain. Cf. note, ll. 1164–66, 1168 and the Introd. p. xxxv.

ll. 1343–44. Ihr Götter. In this address to the gods we see how the faith of Orestes in the benevolent character of the gods has revived — a sure sign that the torments of insanity no longer conjure up doubt and despair, but have given way to the serene influences of nature and hopeful belief in a divine guidance. — After Ihr Götter the Ihr in l. 1344 would regularly stand directly after die in l. 1343. The repetition is required in relative clauses, with the first and second persons of the personal pronoun, when the verb is to agree with the personal pronoun.

The relative die in this line places the finite verbs at the end of the clauses that follow, wandelt, in l. 1344, schüttet, in l. 1347, verwandelt, in l. 1350. With Wenn in l. 1351 begins an adverbial clause, and the finite verb stands at the end of lines 1352 and 1354. wandelt, *proceed*, represents the gods as walking above the storm-clouds.

Page 58. — **line** 1353. Iris freundlich bunt, *Iris in cheerful variegated hues.*

l. 1359. die Eumeniden, the benevolent goddesses, the name given them from superstitious courtesy. Cf. ll. 311, 1148–1244, and see Introd. p. x and xxv.

l. 1361. fernabdonnernd, the word might better be separated: fernab donnernd, *thundering afar off.*

l. 1362. Die Erde dampft, *exhales,* poetical for: „Von der Erde dampft erquickender Geruch." These lines suggested to Wätzold the supposition that the poet possibly intended that a thundershower should pass over the scene during what precedes.

l. 1368. . . . Rat und Schluß, *counsel and resolution.* Schluß = Beschluß.

ACT IV. SCENE 1.

In this act Iphigenia is subjected to a further test. The poet himself has said that the great scene of the third act, in which Orestes is delivered from the curse, is the axis (die Achse) of the piece. This unquestionably is true, for what now follows, as well as what preceded, turns upon the condition and personality of Orestes. But Orestes only *suffers,* while it is for Iphigenia to act. And she must act like a woman, not like a man. But how is she to act? By following the advice of Pylades, or the voice of her heart? In this the great dramatic conflict arises, which keeps Iphigenia in the foreground and makes her the principal actor in the drama. This conflict is introduced in the fourth act and ended in the fifth.

Page 59. — **lines** 1369–71. Denken . . . zu . . . Zudenken with the dative of the person = *destine.* This verb and bereiten in l. 1372 introduce a condition which may be expressed by "if" or "when."

ll. 1369–81. The meter of these thirteen lines is a mixture of dactyls troches, and amphibrachs. The first, fourth, fifth, seventh and thirteenth lines show the following rhythm:

l. 1. — ◡ ◡ — ◡ ◡
l. 4. — ◡ — ◡ ◡ —
l. 5. — ◡ — ◡ ◡ — ◡
l. 7. — ◡ — ◡ ◡ — ◡ ◡
l. 13. — ◡ — ◡ ◡ —

The content is lyrical, and accords with the deeply agitated condition of the speaker.

l. 1375. Tieferschütternden Übergang, *a deeply moving transition.*

l. 1390. ... den staunt' ich an, *upon him I gazed in wonder.*

Page 60. — **line** 1398. ... kluges Wort, the omission of the article here and elsewhere is poetical. Translate: *prudent words.* Cf. l. 1028, note, 1797.

ll. 1399–1400. was ich ... antworte, *what I shall say in answer* ... antworte is here in the subjunctive.

l. 1403. ... hinterha'lten, *deceive.* The prefix is inseparable.

l. 1404. ... abzulisten, *gain by cunning.*

l. 1405. Weh, in M.H.G. and in early modern German was followed by the genitive expressing the cause or occasion of the feeling.

ll. 1411–15. To the struggle in her conscience is added the weight of care for her brother.

l. 1418. Es trübt ... Seele. *My spirit becomes clouded.*

ACT IV. SCENE 2.

Page 61. — **line** 1423. Ich folgte, imp. subj. = „Ich würde folgen."

l. 1434. Ja, in dem innern Tempel, *nay, in the inner temple.* The first falsehood. The P. V. has: „Durch seine Gegenwart, und daß im Heiligtum das böse Übel ihn ergriff, sind wir verunreint."

Page 62. — **line** 1443. nicht eh, bis, *not until,* for nicht eher als bis.

ll. 1444–50. This rapid dialogue, each speech containing but a single line (*Stichomythia*) occurs in the ancient Greek dramas and has been imitated by modern poets.

l. 1448. erdringe nicht, *urge not.*

l. 1454. ... löste, past subjunctive.

Page 63. — **line** 1458. nun einmal. This colloquialism may be variously rendered; in this case by, perhaps, *once for all.* The expression intimates that the fact is known to the person addressed and further discussion is useless. Cf. das ist nun einmal so, "the thing *is* so, what are you going to do about it?"

l. 1459. du hältst, *you deem.*

l. 1460. The prose version reads: Du hältst das möglich was dein Wunsch dir möglich macht.

l. 1466. aufgebrachter Sinn, *angry disposition*, or simply, *indignation*.

Page 64. — line 1473. Umhergetrieben. Cf. l. 1388. Note the dative of an der fremden Grenze, *along a foreign boundary*.

l. 1475. . . . vermagst here needs no infinitive to complete its meaning; its object is was. In translating, the infinitive *to do*, must be expressed.

l. 1477. . . . die Milde, *kindness, gentleness, benevolence*, here personified.

l. 1479. trüb und wild. Goethe often uses trüb, *obscure*, in respect to mental conditions, as though this opposite of clear and bright were peculiarly fitting to describe the uncultured or clouded mind. Translate: *unenlightened and savage.* Cf. 1528–30.

Page 65. — line 1500. O wiederholtest du, the optative subjunctive: *O, if you would but recall.* Cf. note to l. 461.

ACT IV. SCENE 3.

ll. 1596–10. The appropriateness of the picture should be appreciated. The flood, growing by rapid affluents, runs over the rocks on the shore. Thus a river of joy covered up all that was within her, that is, all her fears and sorrows. The "impossible" was realized; she held it in her arms. And again, as on that day in Aulis, a cloud seemed gently to surround her, to lift her from the earth and enfold her in slumber, as when the good goddess encircled her with her saving arm.

l. 1500. das Unmögliche, to meet her brother was the "impossible."

Page 66. — line 1517. mit einziger Gewalt, *with unique power*.

l. 1524. "*Not only in Greece but here also are human beings*," a thought which would hardly have occurred to a Greek in the same connection. There is no trace of such a thought in the play of *Euripides*.

B has:

„Tauris lag wie der Boden einer unfruchtbaren Insel
Hinter dem Schiffenden.
Jzt hat dieser Mann meine Gedanken
Auf das Vergangene geleitet —
Und durch seine Gegenwart mich wieder erinnert,
Daß ich auch Menschen hier verlasse."

ll. 1525–26. Doppelt ... verhaßt, Cf. ll. 1418.

l. 1530. verkennest, fail to recognize, transl. *you know no longer.*

ACT IV. SCENE 4.

Page 67. — **line** 1541. Umloderte ... Flamme, *the beautiful flame of youth shone* (lit., blazed) *about* ... Miss Swanwick translates:

> "And ever with increasing glory shone
> The fire of youth around his noble brow."

ll. 1558–59. *And even a whispering breeze, observed at once by all, rose from the land and spread its gentle pinions.* A characteristic personification, as though the breeze were a lisping child.

Page 68. — **lines** 1565–66. endlich kehrt er sich um, *finally he turns about,* different from er kehrt um, *he returns.*

l. 1571. Ich habe. The omission of the participle in such cases, which is common in English, is unusual in German and permitted only in poetry.

ll. 1583–86. The calculating cunning of Pylades stands in the strongest contrast with the delicate scruples of Iphigenia.

Page 69. — **line** 1591. Gefährlicher ... zusammen. Transl.: *Our dangers are increasing.* In the German the words suggest the idea of a gathering storm.

l. 1595. er bringe, *let him bring.*

l. 1601. So schaff' uns Luft. Luft, *air, breathing space,* here the same as *time,* i.e. a chance for action, by employing the attention of the guard elsewhere.

l. 1605. fromm, very Greek and characteristic. It was a "pious" undertaking, because it favored Greeks and injured a Barbarian.

l. 1609. Zur Felseninsel, i.e. the rocky island of Delos. In the prose version „nach Delphos" is used. Delphi, being an inland place, could not be meant by „Felseninsel." If we must attach a meaning we

may assume that their first visit would be to the celebrated island devoted to Apollo, for the purpose of rendering thanks, and that then they would subsequently bring the statue to Delphi.

l. 1612. die Vatergötter, *the household gods*, in Latin the Lares and Penates.

l. 1613. . . . ihre Wohnungen, *their abodes*, i.e. the rooms in which their images stand.

Page 70. — line 1616. This verse with its six accents was probably left so on purpose by Herder, on account of the fine effect.

l. 1621. The sich in this line is a repetition, for the sake of distinction, and emphasis, of sich in l. 1619.

l. 1622. Note the separable prefix nach = in the direction of; translate, *toward.*

l. 1638. "Deceitfully did fear enter into a league with danger." The personification of the two abstract nouns makes the line poetical. "Fear and danger are companions." Cf. La Fontaine:

> "Le trop d'attention qu'on a pour le danger
> Fait le plus souvent qu'on y tombe."

This recalls the more poetical: "In vitium ducit culpæ fuga" of Horace (*Ars poetica*, 31). The originality of Goethe's line will appear on comparison.

Page 71. — line 1643. Der is the relative pronoun dependent on dem.

l. 1647. Supply: die Not entschuldigt before this line. Pylades goes on as though what Iphigenia had just said was a part of his own remark. The P. V. has entschuldigt's, so also all former editions.

l. 1649. . . . Forderung, *claim*, here, the demand of the conscience or moral sense. To be too exacting in respect to one's self points to hidden pride.

l. 1650. Ich . . . nur, *I do not probe, I only feel.* It should be noted that the safety of Iphigenia rests in her fidelity to her conscience, her instinct, as opposed to the practical arguments of Pylades. Her reason yields, but her feeling does not. This is brought out so strikingly that it constitutes dramatic action in the highest sense. The great dramas in the world's literature owe their high character to the representation of spiritual conflict, as the Antigone, Hamlet and Macbeth.

Page 72. — **line 1651.** *If you rightly feel what you are, you can but honor yourself.* Pylades means that Iphigenia has no reason to fear that her feeling will condemn her, because what he advises is, in his judgment, right.

l. 1655. du lernst es auch . . . in a future sense; sternness of judgment is softened by experience.

l. 1656. . . . dies Geschlecht, *the human race* = das menschliche Geschlecht.

l. 1661. To proceed on our own path and to give heed to our steps, is the rule of practical wisdom.

l. 1668. fragt sich's ob wir ihn gehen? *can there be a question whether we should traverse it* (den Weg).

Page 73. — **line 1676.** nicht einmal, would, in prose, stand before Ein falsches Wort, *not even* . . .

ll. 1680–84. . . . die eh'rne Hand der Not . . . Necessity (the *ανάγκη* of Homer) is the mistress even of the gods. She is the sister of fate and accepts no counsel from any one, hence the participle, unberatne, l. 1684, *uncounseled.* "Brazen" often stands for "irresistible," also "untiring," cf. l. 1070.

l. 1688. Siegel, this *seal* is, of course, the statue of the goddess.

ACT IV. SCENE 5.

l. 1691. bang und bänger. Cf. l. 21, fest und fester.

Page 74. — **line 1696.** . . . Nimmt doch alles ab! Note the position of the verb with doch. This doch implies that the fact is well known. "Everything, we know, weakens in time." abnehmen, *to decrease, lose force.* Cf. such sentences as: Warum sollt' ich es nicht thun? Ist es doch meine Pflicht! *Why should I not do it? It is my duty, you know.* Cf. Introd. p. xxx, note, and xxxi.

l. 1702. entsühnen, to effect the expiation of the curse that rests upon the polluted house. The P. V. has: Vergebens hofft, ich still verwahrt von meiner Göttin den alten Fluch a u s k l i n g e n zu lassen, und durch Gebet und Reinheit die Olympier zu versöhnen. Ausklingen, i.e. *to die away like a sound.*

l. 1708–09. legt . . . mir auf, *imposes on me.*

ll. 1712–17. O, daß . . . Seele! daß goes also with der Titanen,

der alten Götter tiefer Haß . . . Translate, "Oh, that a repugnance may not at last take root in my heart, and the Titans' and old gods' deep hatred of you, Olympians, strike, too, its vulture talons into my tender breast." Cf. Introd. p. xix.

In Dr. Buchheim's edition we find the note "on account of her undeserved suffering." But Iphigenia does not think of her past suffering. The special significance of the exclamation must be sought in what she said in ll. 1699–1711, and, more particularly ll. 1707–11. If the Olympian gods, in whom she has placed her trust, do not favor the efforts of her pure hand and pure heart, but compel her to rob, and to deceive the man to whom she owes her life, *she may learn to abhor them.* And therefore she cries out in pathetic agony: *Save me, and save your image in my soul!* Who does not see that it is not so much the *suffering* as rather the *fear of losing her faith in the gods* that makes her use this language, and *that this fear is based on her aversion to doing wrong?*

The fact is of great importance if we would really see Iphigenia as Goethe wanted her to appear and to be. In the P. V. we have: Wenn ich mit Betrug und Raub beginne, wie will ich Seg'n bringen und wo will ich enden? Ach, warum scheint der Undank mir wie Tausend andern nicht ein leichtes unbedeutendes Vergehen."

l. 1751. Olympier, so called from Mount Olympus in Thessaly. Its top towering into the clouds was fabled to form the entrance to the abode of the gods who had overthrown the old dynasty of the Titans.

Page 76.—**line** 1753. By ein leichtes Gewölke we may understand the vapory smoke that continually rises from the volcano of Mount Ætna in Sicily. It was believed that the Titans lay buried under this mountain, especially the Titan Enceladus, as Virgil tells us in his *Æneid* III, 578.

l. 1760. Des Ahnherrn, i.e. Tantalus. The same reference is in l. 1762, der Verbannte, *the exiled one*, and in l. 1764, der Alte, *the ancient one*. In the prose version we read: „Und Tantal' horcht in seiner Höhle."

ll. 1763–65. After denkt supply an, *remember*. This use of denken is permissible only in poetry. Cf. the omission of a preposition (auf) after horcht in l. 1763, *hearkens to*.

This poem expresses the awe of the popular belief. Iphigenia heard

it from her *nurse*, hence to her it is "an old, old story" kept alive by nurses and other menials. It takes here the place of one of the utterances of the "chorus" in the Greek tragedy. Cf. Introd. p. lv. In the first five stanzas the song of the Parcæ is given, in the sixth we have the words of the nurse. That Iphigenia struggles for a higher conception of deity we learned in ll. 549–560, 1094–1117, and in other passages. But the old story haunts her in this trying moment. Will her nobler faith triumph? The last act of the drama will answer this.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Page 77. — **line** 1773. Sei, the subjunctive of oblique oration, as though the language of "rumor" were quoted indirectly.

l. 1774. diese Weihe, not "consecration," but act of purification, *lustration*.

l. 1775. *The sacred pretext of this delay* (Zögrung). zögern, *delay, linger*, and zaudern, *hesitate, be irresolute*, are not equivalent synonyms. *Delay* is properly Verzögerung. In l. 1669 Iphigenia uses zaudern, „laß mich zaudern." She cannot *make up her mind* to do what is expected of her. She does not wish *to save time*, but to deliberate in order that she may arrive at no wrong conclusion.

l. 1777. Es komme schnell . . . This imperative expresses energy. The adverb schnell, repeated in the following line, points to the quality of "swiftness" attributed to the king by Euripides in the first act of his play ("a barbarian who moves his feet like swift wings, and to whom his swiftness has given the name of Thoas"; *Thôos* (θόος) being the Greek for swift or quick).

l. 1782. . . . wie ihr pflegt, *as you are wont to do.* The verb pflegen, in the sense of "being wont" or "accustomed," requires an infinitive which, however, is sometimes understood. Here: „wie ihr sie zu fassen pflegt."

ACT V. SCENE 2.

l. 1783. . . . wechselt, *alternates.*

Page 78. — **lines** 1785–86. The article is used before Verrat, while Nachsicht und Güte are used without it. The latter are used in *adverbial phrases*, while the former is a *personification* of treason, and in

such a case the article is required, as a rule. Cf. l. 1787 zur Sklaverei, and l. 1789 der Freiheit. This principle will be found illustrated on almost every page. — der ich sie . . . bildete, *who trained her to treason by* (or through) *indulgence and kindness.*

l. 1791. der heil'ge Grimm, *the sacred fury,* viz., of the savage religion and its votaries.

l. 1792. The form Sie wäre froh gewesen is more elegant than so wäre sie froh gewesen. It is generally preferred when such a sentence follows a hypothetical statement with falls or a similar conjunction understood.

l. 1797. . . . verwegnen Wunsch, when a participle or adjective precedes a noun the omission of the article is permitted in poetry, and sometimes in prose. Transl., *My kindness incites* (lit., lures forth) *in her breast a daring wish.*

l. 1799. Sie sinnt . . . aus, *She plans a fate of her own.* Sich aussinnen is *to devise, find out by thinking.*

l. 1801. Nun widersteh' ich der, sc. Schmeichelei. The sentence is equivalent to Nun, da ich der widerstehe. Transl., *Now, as I resist that . . .*

l. 1803. altverjährtes, alt+verjährt; — verjähren, *to expire by the lapse of time, become obsolete,* is applied to adverse claims against property which are no longer valid after a certain number of years. Transl., *My kindness seems to her a property due her by ancient prescriptive right.*

ACT V. SCENE 3.

l. 1805. Du schiebst . . . auf, *you postpone.* The P. V. is more explicit: Des Opfers Aufschub ist wichtig geuug, daß ich dich selbst darum befrage.

Page 79. — lines 1810 and 1814. Cf. ll. 1785–86.

l. 1816. Er sinnt den Tod . . . Wolke, i.e. he resembles Jupiter who, surrounded by clouds, "meditates" the death which his messengers, the lightnings, execute, while he himself remains unseen. Sinnen is used poetically for ersinnen, *to devise,* etc.

ll. 1819–20. Er aber schwebt . . . fort. Lit., *But he hovers onward.* — durch seine Höhen, *through lofty heights.* Ein unerreichter Gott, lit., *an unapproachable god,* that is "impassive"; transl., *a god*

above reach. The picture is striking and in keeping with the idea expressed in l. 1816, for the cloud which harbors death moves on through the mountain range as the storm proceeds.

l. 1821. **tönt**; **tönen** is a neuter verb used transitively only in a factitive sense. Transl., *The sacred lip* (i.e. of the priestess) intones a savage song. This is a taunt, because Iphigenia had just spoken to him as the priestess of a goddess whose gentleness she praised. We must not forget that the king smarts under the refusal of Iphigenia to become his wife.

l. 1822. **Nicht Priesterin ... Tochter.** The answer is by implication, as though for „heil'ge Lippe" in the preceding line, the king had said die heil'ge Dienerin der Göttin. Iphigenia wishes it understood by him that the daughter of Agamemnon, and not the priestess, is making this appeal.

ll. 1823–24. You used to honor the word of the stranger (and now) you want to command imperiously the princess?

l. 1827. **Und folgsam,** *and while obeying;* **folgsam** is *docile, plastic.*

Page 80.—l. 1832. **Wir fassen ... an,** We seize upon, *avail ourselves of ...*

ll. 1835–36. **... das Gebot, dem ... ist.** As a rule, all primitive races are hospitable, but they soon become the victims of unscrupulous strangers, hence laws are made against all foreigners. Homer represents the usage of a primitive race in his *Odyssey*, IX, I, 270, etc. Among the Latins, the term "a guest," *hostis*, assumed the meaning of an enemy, whence also in English "the host" (of a house), the armèd host = army, and the words hostile and hostility.

As Thoas does not answer the remark of Iphigenia, we may assume that he admits its justice. His character, as shown throughout the drama, is of a type to justify Iphigenia in assuming that he does not share the narrow prejudices of the common people. But that he knows what dangers threaten a peaceful people from the visits of strangers clearly appears in the sequel. Cf. ll. 2099–2106.

l. 1838. **... Anteil und Bewegung,** *interest and emotion* for sympathetic excitement.

l. 1840. Cf. Soph. Electra, l. 212:

"— — — *τὰ δὲ τοῖς δυνατοῖς*
οὐκ ἐριστὰ πλάθειν."

"With Kings 'tis ill to strive."
Plumptre's Transl.

l. 1841. immer is here the same as immerhin, *anyhow*, or some word expressing that no great importance is attached to the fact. The idea is: "It matters not whether I speak or keep silence, you cannot but know what is and will always remain the feeling of my heart."

l. 1845. Wie mehr = Wie viel mehr.

l. 1847. ... feierlich, *solemnly*, because the early death was to take place as a sacrifice in the temple. der frühe Tod, *death in early youth*.

l. 1848. zuckte, was brandished, *flashed*, as though the knife performed a personal act.

l. 1850. ... wirbelnd, lit., *whirling*. Miss Swanwick translates this line: "A dizzy horror overwhelmed my soul."

Page 81. — lines 1852–53. The humane sentiment here expressed is as old as the race, but whenever it is manifested it is in individuals who have towered above the common level.

l. 1854. Du weißt es, kennst mich. A good example of the difference between wissen and kennen. Before und du willst supply doch, to make the translation easier.

l. 1859. Stünd', impf. subj., for Ständ', which is now most often used.

l. 1860. Note that when, as here, an und connects two conditional clauses, the following verb stands *after* its subject as in a simple declarative sentence. There is then no inversion. Like und, oder may be similarly employed.

l. 1862. Die Rechte seines Busens, *the rights of his heart*, of *humanity*, i.e. as her brother.

l. 1868. Auch with nicht, *neither*.

l. 1870. zur List ihm Freude, is an unusual use of Freude. Transl. *pleasure in cunning*.

l. 1871. Bald would be repeated in prose: *now — now*.

l. 1872. der Gewaltige ... übt. The meaning is clearer in the first prose version: der Gewaltige verdient, daß man sie (i.e. die List) gegen ihn braucht.

Page 82. — line 1875. The king's thought is: "Do not carelessly

pass judgment on yourself, because, if you use cunning (and I know you do) yours is not a 'pure soul.'"

l. 1877. . . . will, *is about to.*

l. 1878. Im ersten Anfall, *on its first attack.*

l. 1880. The schöne Bitte, is called a *graceful branch* by metonymy. The poet had in mind the custom of petitioners, who deposited an olive or laurel bough wound around with wool on the altar of the god to whom they prayed.

l. 1883. Was bleibt mir nun, . . . A woman's most powerful weapon having apparently failed, what else can she do? Shall she invoke the goddess for a miracle in her behalf?

l. 1890. wohl, in an affirmative sentence with interrogative meaning corresponds to "I suppose," or "have they not?"

Page 83. — line 1894. Note the emphasis on e r (spaced letter). Unmögliches for der Unmögliche. (Cf. l. 1510).

l. 1896. In all ages heroic deeds have been told and told again. In Greece this was done by minstrels called "rhapsodists" who wandered from place to place.

l. 1897. Als, *except.*

ll. 1898–1904. The logical beginning is in the l. 1904. Is he alone praised, who (= der in l. 1898) steals into the host of the enemy at night (and), raging unawares like a flame, seizes the sleeping, etc. . . . gedrängt von den Ermunterten, *hard pressed by the finally awakened enemy,* etc. The reference is to the expedition of Diomed and Odysseus against the Thracian King, Rhesus, whose horses they stole by night. (*Iliad,* Book 10.) Unversehen, *suddenly.* Cf. note l. 1016.

l. 1904. . . . der allein, as before, with verb understood. The reference is to heroes like Theseus, who took the way by land from Troezen to Athens, clearing the country of robbers on his way. Buchheim.

l. 1916. She addresses the gods: Allein euch . . . Kniee, "But I leave it to you, ye gods," that is, place it in the lap of the gods, *ἀλλ' ἤτοι μὲν ταῦτα θεῶν ἐν γούνασι κεῖται. Iliad,* XVII, l. 514, etc.

ll. 1916–19. "If you are truthful as you are said to be."

The conditional form, gives, in this instance, to the feeling of the speaker more than ordinary significance. If the gods are not truthful, if, perhaps, they are what their enemies call them, *where can the truthful suppliant find redress?*

Page 84. — lines 1934–35. *Us two, those who remain.* The intensity of her feeling makes her forget that there remains Electra.

l. 1936. . . . wenn du darfst, *if you can*, i.e., if your heart permits it. darfst is not *dare*.

l. 1937. Der rohe Sythe . . . This is of course said in irony.

l. 1940. . . . unter jedem Himmel, *under any sky, in whatever clime*.

l. 1942. . . . mir, is the ethical dative, for her anxiety is rather for her brother than for herself. The word may be left untranslated.

l. 1947. Worein, for worin, now the common form.

Page 85. — line 1953. . . . künstlich-dichtend, *by artful fiction*.

ll. 1954–56. . . . der lang Verschloßnen . . . ums Haupt, *about the head of one long secluded*, or, possibly, *of one who had long locked her secret in her own breast*. Cf. ll. 66–73.

l. 1957. Ich könnte . . . werden — The sense of these words is: "I admit the possibility of being imposed on, but —"

l. 1965. „Frauen," archaic genitive.

l. 1970. Du hältst mir Wort, *you will keep your word with me*. Cf. ll. 293–94. The positive form of the remark shows her faith in the noble nature of the king.

ll. 1973–76. "A king does not, from embarrassment, make promises, as common people do, in order to free himself from the petitioner for a moment, nor does he promise for an emergency which he does not himself anticipate."

l. 1977. "He does not really feel the height of his dignity, until, etc." The P. V. has: „ihn freut es, wenn er ein Versprechen erfüllen kann."

Page 86. — line 1979. Unwillig, has here the double meaning of *indignantly* and *reluctantly*.

ll. 1983–85. Translation: "O grant that mercy, like the sacred light of the calm flame of a sacrifice, wreathed about with hymns of praise and gratitude and joy, may shine forth for me."

Miss Swanwick translates:

> "Let mercy, like the consecrated flame
> Of silent sacrifice, encircled round
> With songs of gratitude, and joy, and praise
> Above the tumult gently rise to heaven."

This translation omits the idea that the king, should show mercy to her, as indicated by the dative mir.

The P. V. has no such reference: „O laß die Gnade wie eine schöne Flamme des Altars umkränzt von Lobgesang und Dank und Freude lodern."

l. 1990. Sehr viel, i.e. Überlegung.

l. 1992. ... Gewähre ... fühlst! *Grant my prayer in accordance with the feelings of your heart!*

ACT V. SCENE 4.

Page 88. — line 2011. ... ich horche, for ich gehorche, *I obey.*

ACT V. SCENE 5.

l. 2016. Dies ist ... Haupt. The courtierlike language of Pylades is characteristic of the man as we know him from what precedes. It forms a strong contrast with the rather curt remarks of Orestes.

l. 2020. The present tense is used for the future.

Page 89. — line 2031. Der raschen Jugend. Translate: *the quick impulse of youth*, lit. impetuous youth.

ACT V. SCENE 6.

l. 2035. The emphatic dieser (in spaced letters, answering to our Italics) is of course the genitive singular feminine. — hier ist das Schwert. To offer a sword in token of proof of descent may seem strange, but in ancient times, as well as in the early ages of the Christian era, a good sword was a rare object of great value, owing to the difficulty of manufacturing one, in the absence of steel. This fact appears even in the epic poems of the 11th century, such as the *Chanson de Roland* and others. We must suppose that the sword of Agamemnon had a wide reputation.

Page 90. — lines 2048–49. nachahmend, *by imitation.* — ... heiligt ... zum Gesetz, *consecrates it as a law.*

ll. 2061–62. ich stehe selbst ... dem Feinde, *I myself will take my stand against the enemy.*

l. 2064. Mit nichten! *By no means!*

Page 91. — **line 2068.** Er falle gleich, a poetical arrangement for „Falle er gleich," i.e. Obgleich er falle, or, in prose, Wenn er auch fällt, *even though he fall*... The Iphigenia of Euripides says:

> "— the man
> Dying is mourned, as to his house a loss;
> But woman's weakness is of light esteem."
>
> *Potter's Translation*, ll. 1078–80.

so preiset... Lied, *his fame will live in song*...

l. 2069. die unendlichen, instead of nie endenden, *never ending.*

l. 2070. Frau, *wife.*

l. 2072. durchgeweinten, for durchweinten, which is more usual, *passed in tears*... — Tag- und Nächten, the plural dative termination en of Nächten belongs also to Tag-. This license is rare.

ll. 2073–74. When a heart in silence wears itself out in anxious unavailing efforts to recall the quickly departed friend.

ll. 2082–83. ... das Mal wie von drei Sternen, *the birthmark as of three stars* (a free invention of Goethe).

ll. 2084–85. ... das auf schwere That ... deutete, *which the priest interpreted as pointing to a grievous deed*...

ll. 2086–91. Our poet has used here a device of Sophocles who, in his *Electra*, represents a similar scene of recognition. An old slave of the family, on seeing Orestes, notices a scar on his forehead, which he had received by a fall, while chasing a hind with his sister Electra.

The words rasch und unvorsichtig, as applied to Electra, accord with the character under which she was represented by the Greek dramatists. — Nach ihrer Art, *in accordance with her manner* (or, *as was her manner*).

l. 2091. Dreifuß, *tripod.*

l. 2095. Und hübe, note the conditional in this subjunctive. For hübe it is now more usual to say höbe.

Page 92. — **line 2104.** An allusion to the story of the golden fleece stolen in Colchis, by Jason, with the help of Medea, to the horses which Hercules captured at the command of Eurystheus, and to the maidens Medea, and Ariadne, won by Jason (cf. l. 1176, note) and Theseus; and to others.

l. 2105. The sie in this line stands for „der Grieche," used collectively for the "people" in l. 2102. The P. V. has: die Griechen. Cf. l. 465 (Weib) and l. 468 (ihnen). The use is limited to poetry and poetic prose.

l. 2113. This version of the oracle may be compared with that given by Orestes in the *Taurian Iphigenia* of Euripides:

> " *Σὺ δ'εἴπας ἐλθεῖν Ταυρικῆς μ'ὅρους χθονός,*
> *ἔνθ' Ἄρτεμις σὴ σύγγονος βωμοὺς ἔχει,*
> *λαβεῖν τ'ἄγαλμα θεᾶς, ὅ φάσιν ἐνθάδε*
> *ἐς τούσδε ναοὺς οὐρανοῦ πεσεῖν ἄπο·*
> *λαβόντα δ' ἢ ἠτέχναισιν ἢ τύχῃ τινί,*
> *κίνδυνον ἐκπλήσαντ', Ἀθηναίων χθονὶ*
> *δοῦναι· — —"*
>
> *Eurip. Iph. Taur.* ll. 85, etc.

> "Thy voice commanded me to speed my course
> To this wild coast of Tauris, where a shrine
> Thy sister has, Diana; thence to take
> The statue of the goddess, which from heaven,
> (So say the natives) to this temple fell.
> This image, or by fraud or fortune won,
> The dangerous toil achieved, to place the prize
> In the Athenian land.
>
> *Oxford Translation.*

löset, *will be dissolved.* When the knot is "dissolved," the fatal charm disappears.

l. 2116. Wir legten's . . . dich. *We interpreted it as referring to Apollo's sister, but he meant you.* Cf. ll. 722–27 and 1610–12. — gedenken, is used poetically for meinen. Its regular use is with the genitive, *to remember.*

Page 93. — line 2127. Gleich . . . heil'gen Bilde. — *Like a sacred image,* for instance the *palladium* of Troy, the statue of Pallas (Athena) which, in the reign of Ilus, fell from heaven at Troy. It was carried off by Ulysses and Diomed because, as long as it remained in Troy, the city could not be taken.

l. 2132. Da stands for als, *when,* as repeatedly noticed before.

l. 2139. . . . die alte Krone . . . The crown was not the symbol of royalty in Greece. In primitive times it was the scepter; later, a fillet, "diadema," became its emblem.

Page 94. — lines 2166–67. O geben . . . Lohn . . . The verb is here in the optative subjunctive: *may the gods give*, etc.

l. 2170. schwellt . . . an, translate: *will swell.* The prefix an only strengthens the meaning of „schwellen."

l. 2174. . . . So geht! the king had said in l. 2150, in answer to the sublimely confident appeal of Iphigenia: "You cannot refuse it, grant it soon!" To the touching words with which she then addresses him, he has only the brief answer, *Farewell!* But nothing could surpass the pathos of this: „Lebt wohl." Our sympathy remains with the noble Barbarian in his loneliness.

The drama closes, as it began, in simple and dignified language which is in keeping with its exhalted theme. Eine himmelreine Dichtung it has been called. The idea of purity and purification pervades it, and well might a French critic and translator, M. Legrelle, call its heroine *un type éternel et suprême de perfection idéale.* Gœdeke, in his *Goethe's Leben und Schriften*, calls it „das edelste Bild des griechischen Altertums," which „dem Geiste der Griechen geradezu entgegengesetzt, als vollkommenste Blüte des deutschen Geistes erscheint."

In his admirable *Life and Works of Goethe*, Bielschowsky says of it:

„Von den ersten feierlich bewegten Worten: „Heraus in eure Schatten, rege Wipfel des alten heil'gen dichtbelaubten Haines" bis zum letzten thränenfeuchten „Lebt wohl" durchfließt eine sanfte Harmonie das Stück, deren voller Wohllaut allein unserm geistigen Ohre vernehmbar ist, weil keine Kunst des Vortrags ihn erreichen kann.

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ABBREVIATIONS.

Æsch., Æschylus.
Agam., Agamemnon.
Andr., Andromache.
Bk., Book.
Cf., compare.
Clytem., Clytemnestra.
Choëph., Choëphoroi.
Elect., Electra.
Eurip., Euripides.
Frag., Fragments.
Introd., Introduction.
Iph., Iphigenia.
Iph. Taur., Iphigenia Taurica, or Iphigenia among the Tauri.
Ital. Reise, Italienische Reise.
l., line.
ll., lines.
lit., literally.
Met., Metamorphoses.
Odyss., Odyssey.
Or., Orestes.
Philoct., Philoctetes.
poet., poetica.
Pont., Pontia.
P. V., Prose version.
Prom., Prometheus.
Soph., Sophocles.
Transl., Translation.
Werke, The Weimar edition of Goethe's works.
Zeitschft. f. d. d. U., Zeitschrift für den deutschen Unterricht.

INDEX.

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